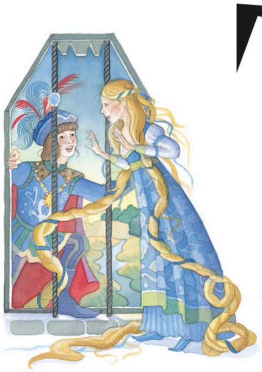
A First Book of
FAIRY TALES
and
A First Book of
MYTHS



Stories retold by Mary Hoffman

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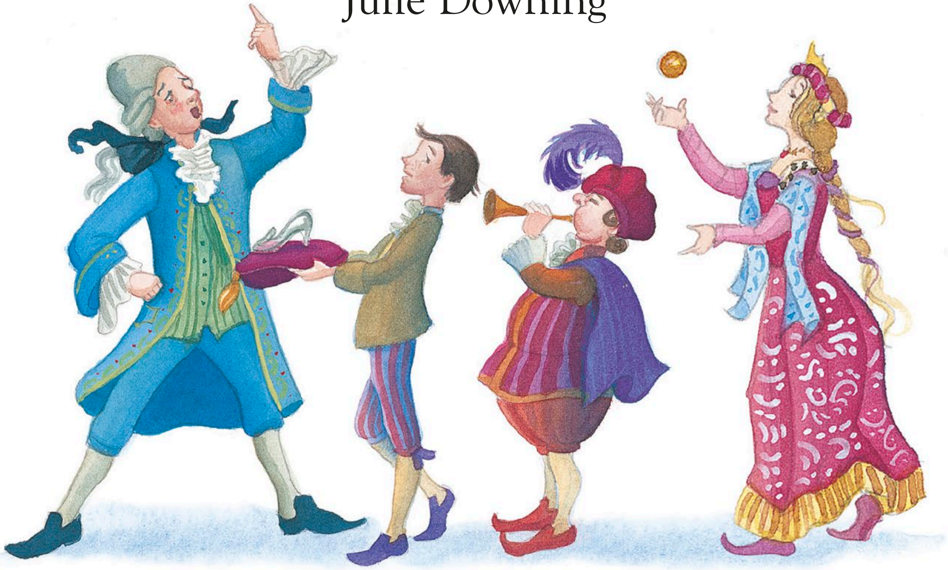

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For Sophie Biancardi

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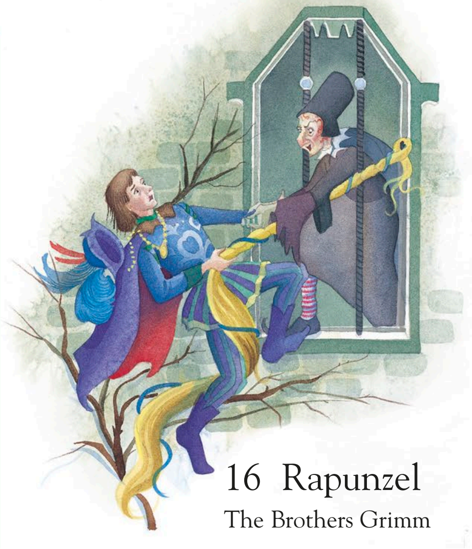

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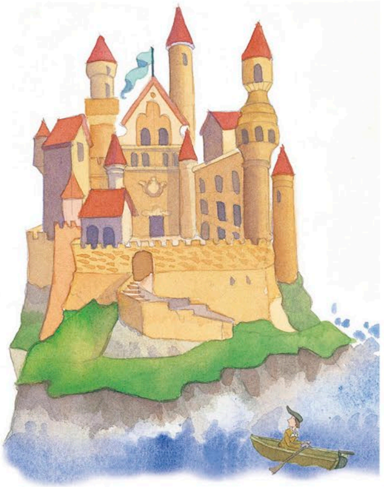

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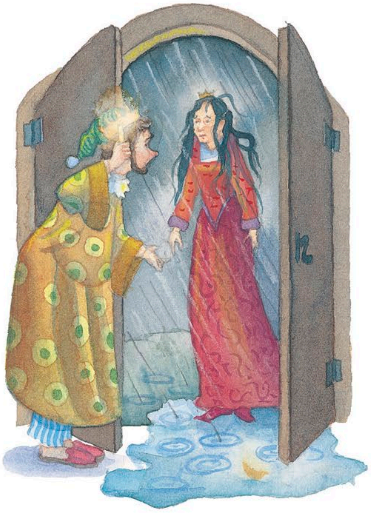

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Introduction

What is a fairy tale? One thing we know for certain—there doesn't have to be a fairy in it. Of course, there often is a fairy—like the godmother in "Cinderella," and the wicked and good fairies who come to Sleeping Beauty's christening. But it is not compulsory.

What makes a story a fairy tale is a little bit of magic that stirs the imagination, and it doesn't matter where it comes from. It can be a pumpkin that is turned into a beautiful coach, a talking animal that can make a wish come true, or a spell that turns a handsome prince into a beast. Anything can happen in the world of fairy tales.

But a fairy tale is more than just a fantasy. There is often a strong moral lesson—kindness is rewarded, and greed and selfishness are punished.

A long time ago, long before people could read or write, storytelling already played an important part in their lives. Along with music-making and dancing, stories were the main form of entertainment. And, although fairy tales are now treated as stories for children, originally they were listened to and known by everyone in the community.

All around the world, tales were handed down from generation to generation. Many fairy tales shared the same themes—good always triumphed over evil, and the central characters lived happily ever after.

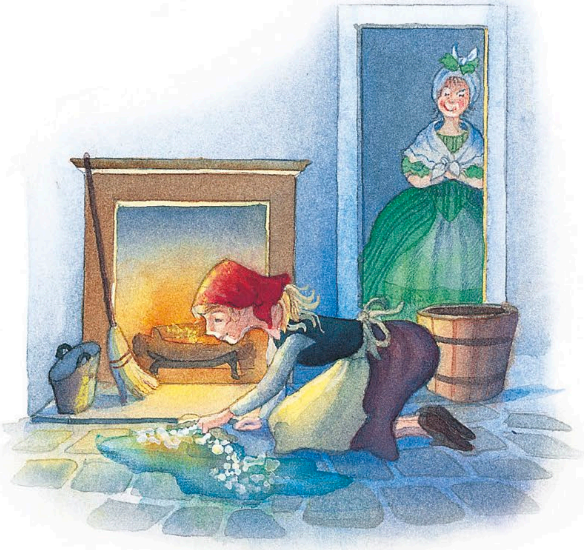
When ordinary people started to read and write, the traditional stories might have been lost. But with the help of collectors who listened to them and wrote them down, fairy tales were preserved and continued to entertain children. Some of these fairy tales, such as “Cinderella” and “Sleeping Beauty,” have remained as popular today as when they were first told hundreds of years ago.

I have chosen some of the best-loved and well-known fairy tales from the European tradition and added a sprinkling of the less familiar. I seem to have known them all my life, and I hope you will enjoy them as much as I do.

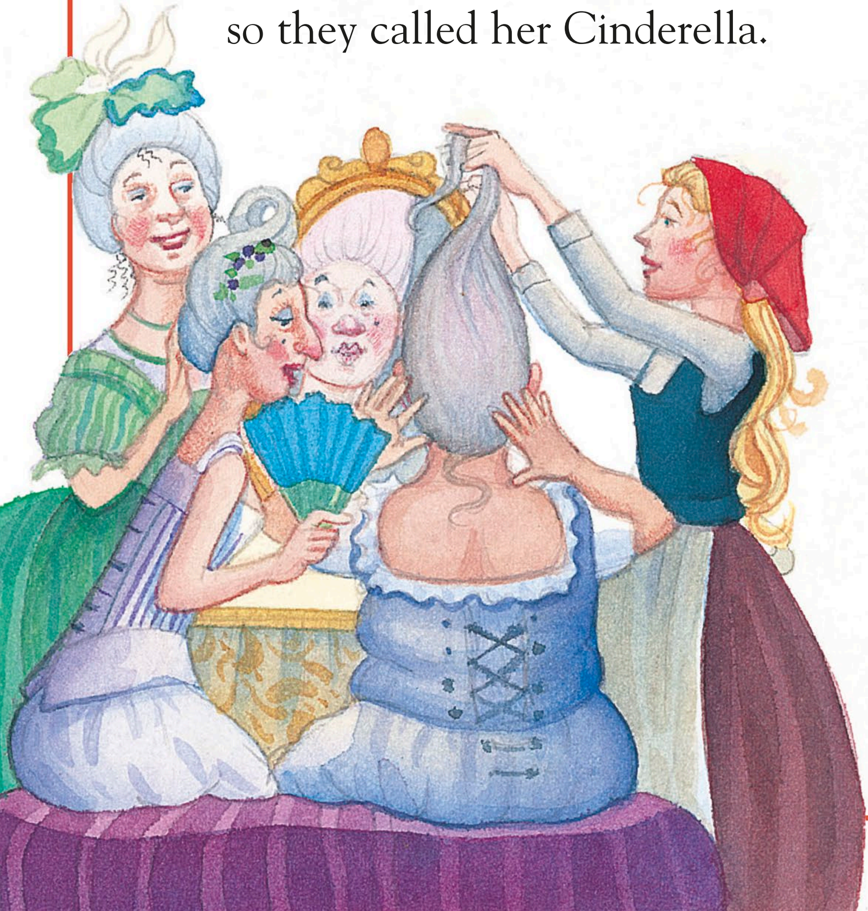
Mary Hoffman

Cinderella

Once upon a time there was a nobleman who had a sweet wife and daughter. But his wife died, and his second one was horrid. She had two daughters whose bad tempers had given them ugly faces.

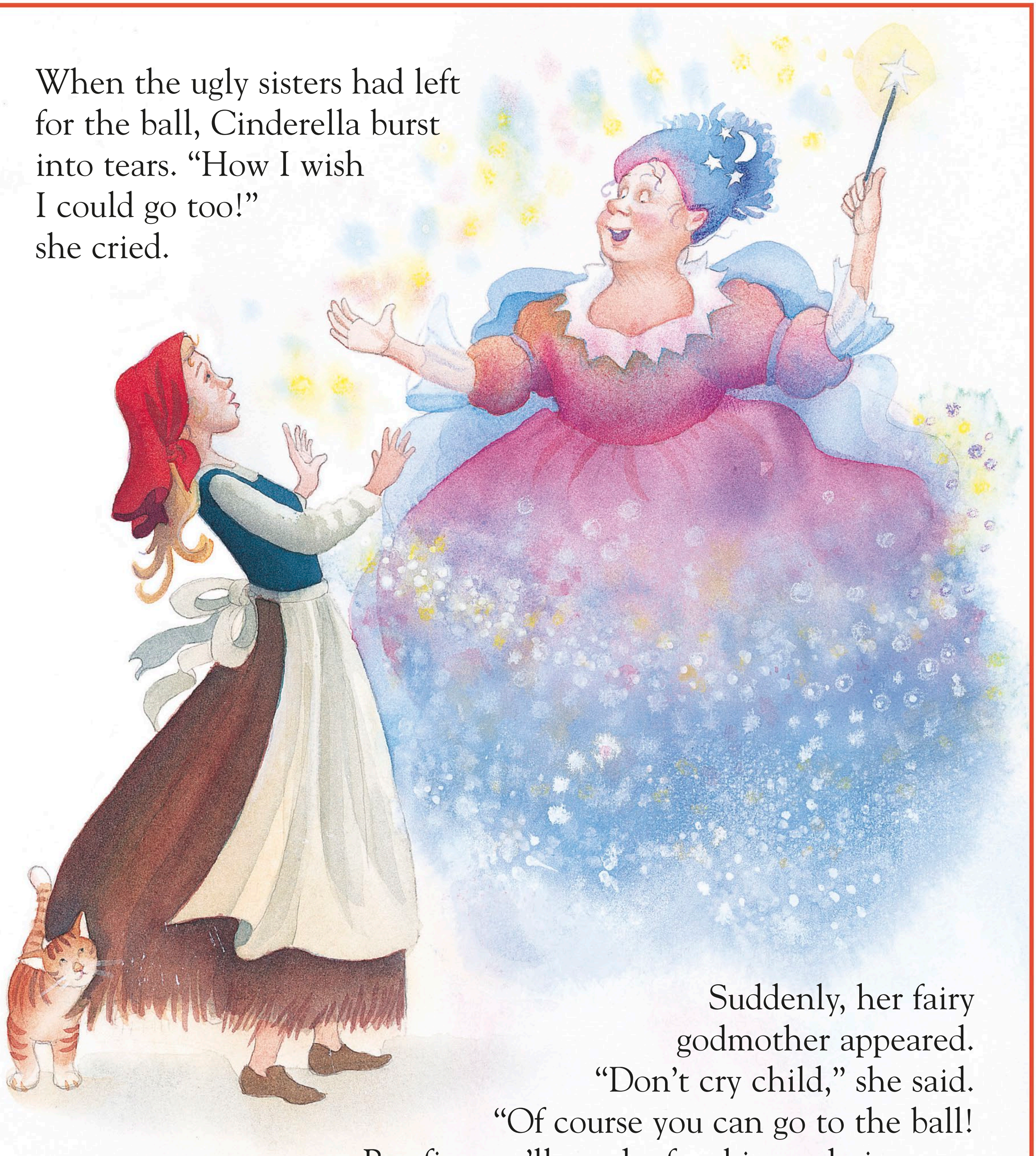


They were mean to their stepsister, Ella. She had to sweep the cinders from the grate, so they called her Cinderella.



One day, the king's son sent out invitations to a grand ball at the palace. The ugly sisters spent ages deciding what to wear. And Cinderella had to help them get dressed and brush their hair. There was no question of Cinderella going to the ball in her rags!

When the ugly sisters had left
for the ball, Cinderella burst
into tears. "How I wish
I could go too!"
she cried.

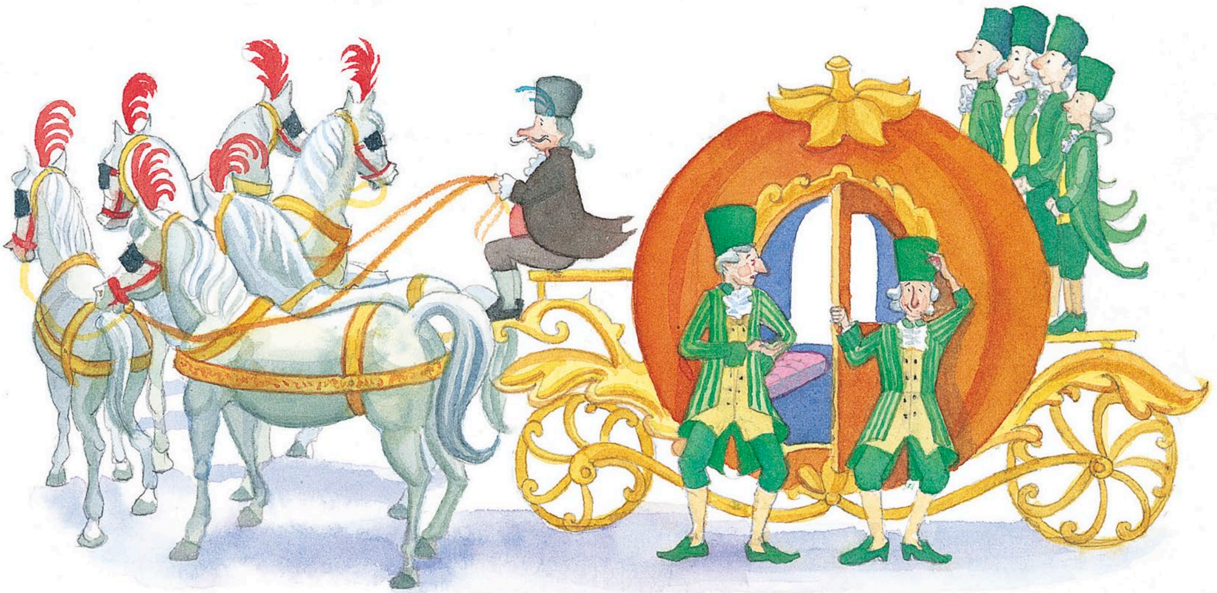


Suddenly, her fairy
godmother appeared.
"Don't cry child," she said.
"Of course you can go to the ball!
But first we'll need a few bits and pieces….

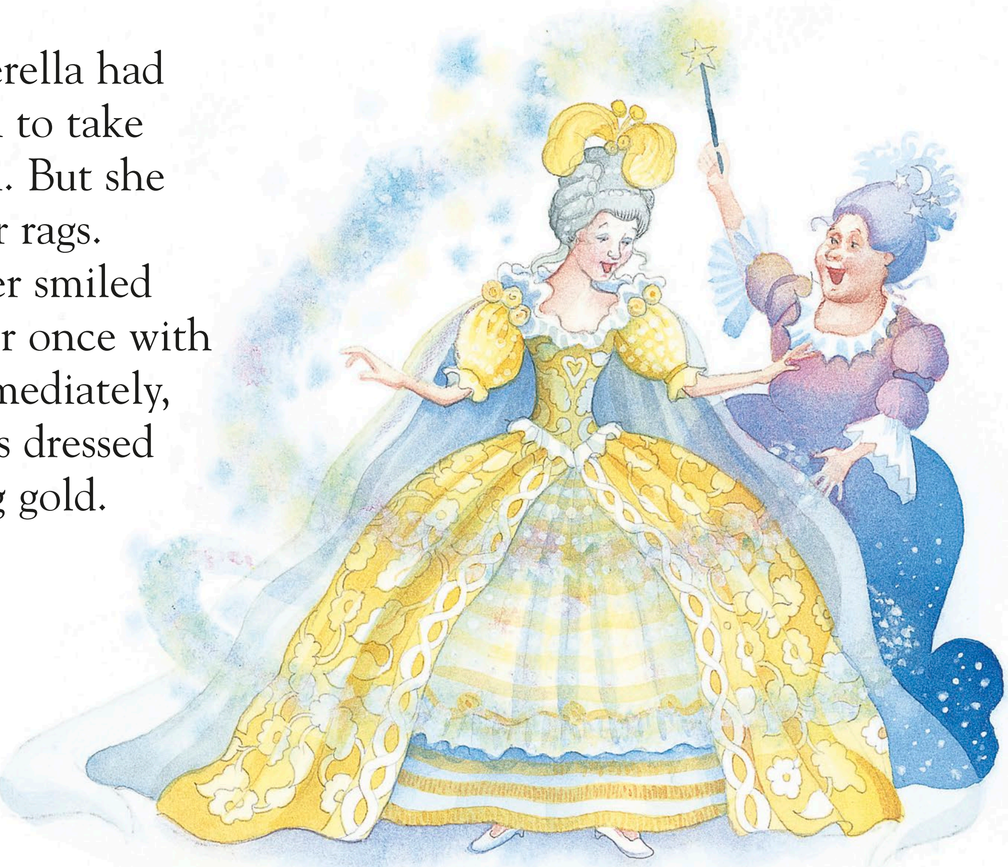
… get me one pumpkin, six little mice, one large rat, and six lizards."

Well, Cinderella couldn't think how a pumpkin and some animals were going to get her to the ball, but she did as her godmother asked.

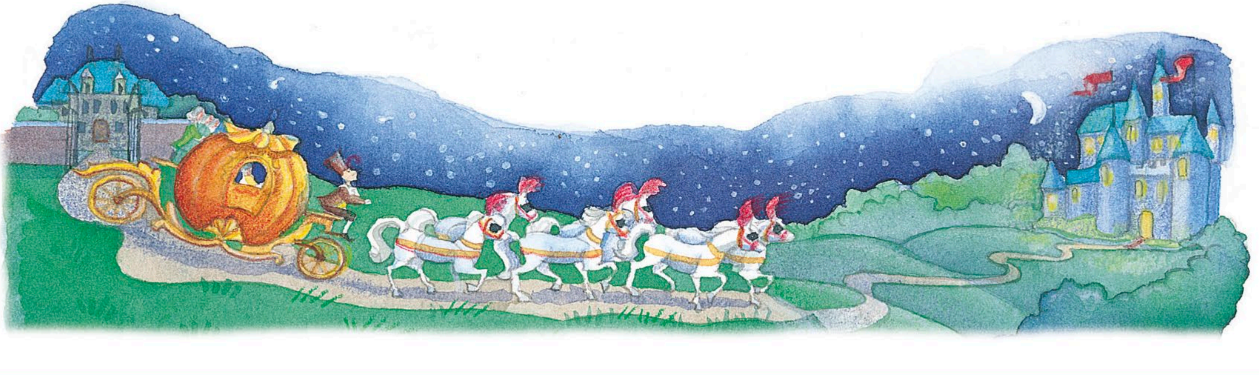
Her fairy godmother waved her wand and … whoosh! The pumpkin disappeared, and in its place stood a beautiful coach. Then she waved her wand again. The six little mice turned into a team of handsome carriage horses. The rat was soon a rather fat coachman, and the lizards became six footmen.



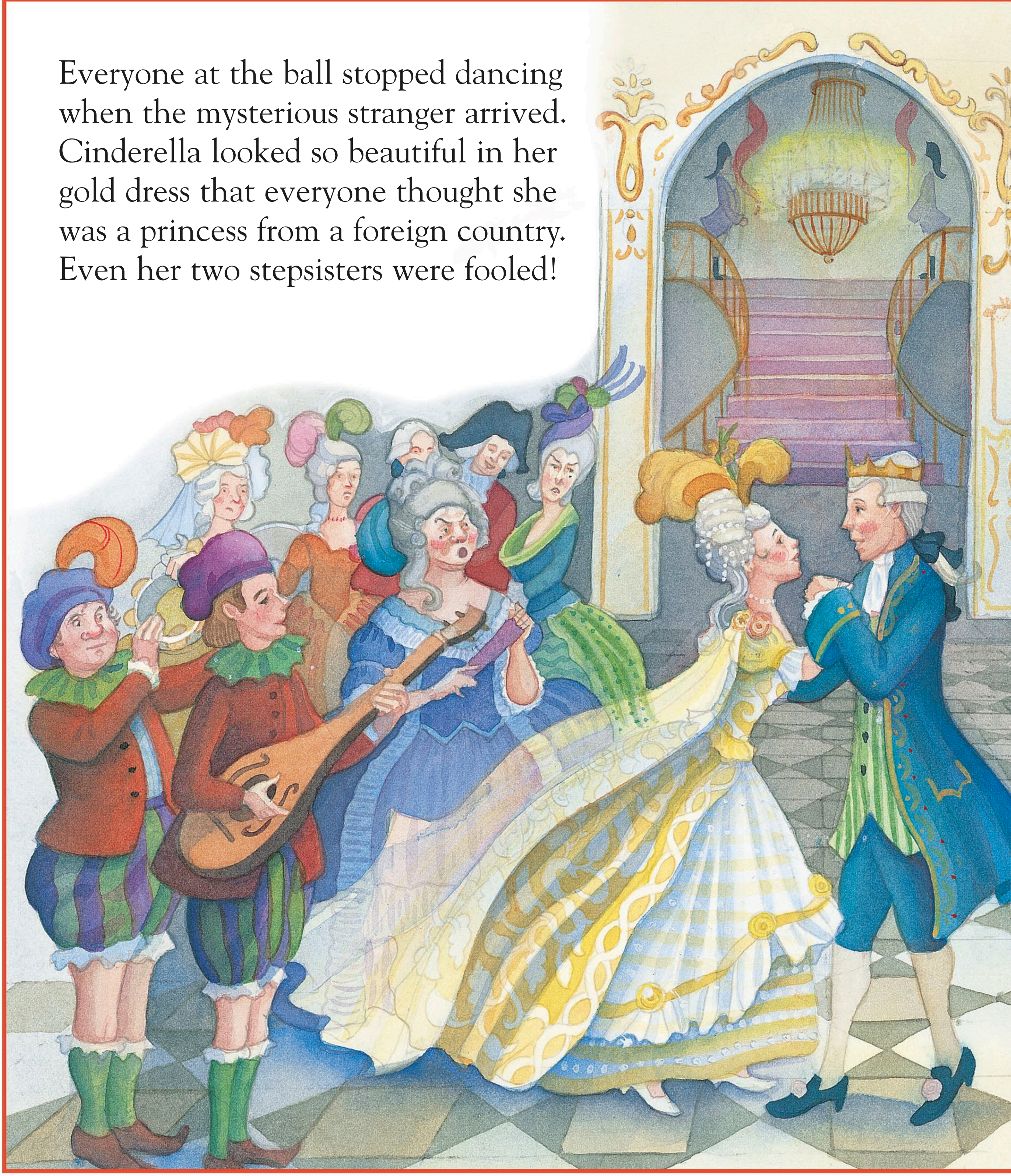
So now Cinderella had a lovely coach to take her to the ball. But she was still in her rags. Her godmother smiled and tapped her once with her wand. Immediately, Cinderella was dressed in shimmering gold.

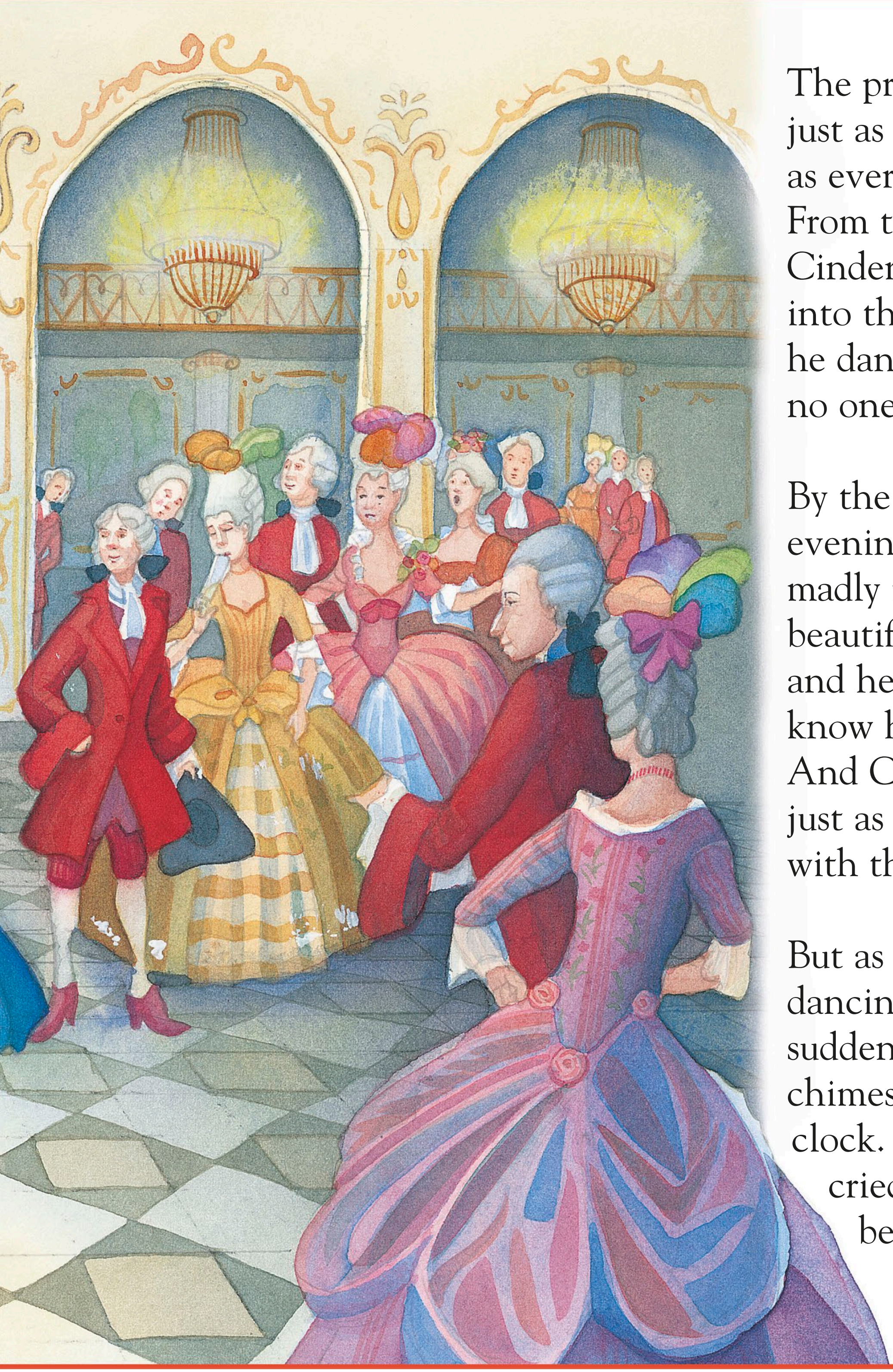


"Now, off you go," said her godmother. "But, remember, at midnight everything will go back to the way it was. So you must be home before then." Cinderella promised, then stepped into her beautiful coach. The six white horses set off toward the king's palace.



Everyone at the ball stopped dancing when the mysterious stranger arrived. Cinderella looked so beautiful in her gold dress that everyone thought she was a princess from a foreign country. Even her two stepsisters were fooled!

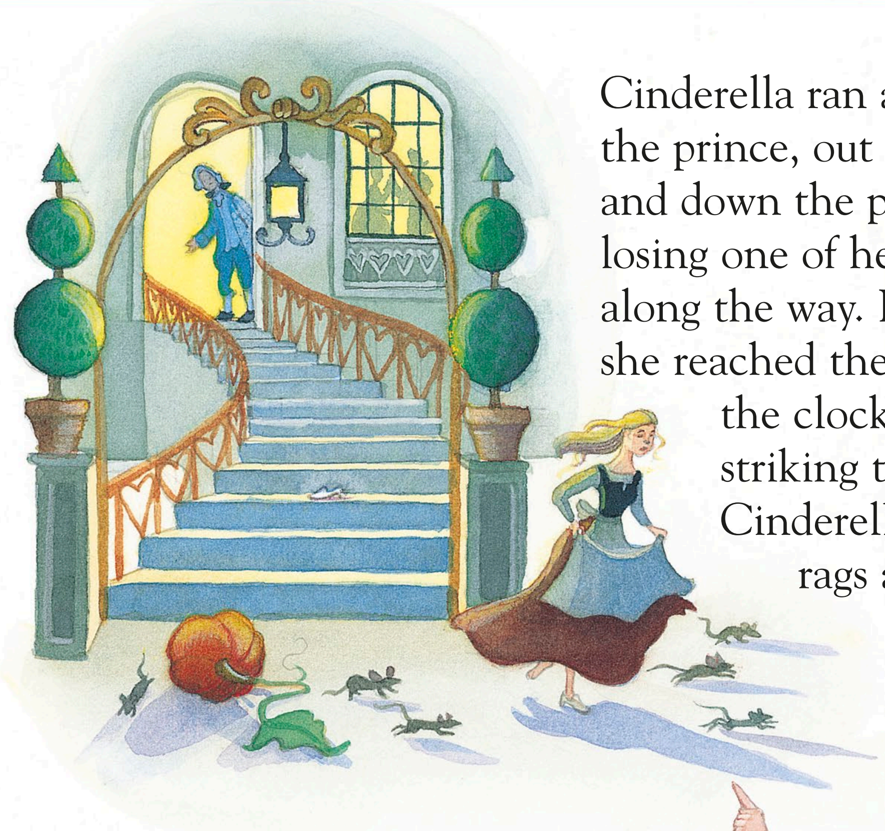




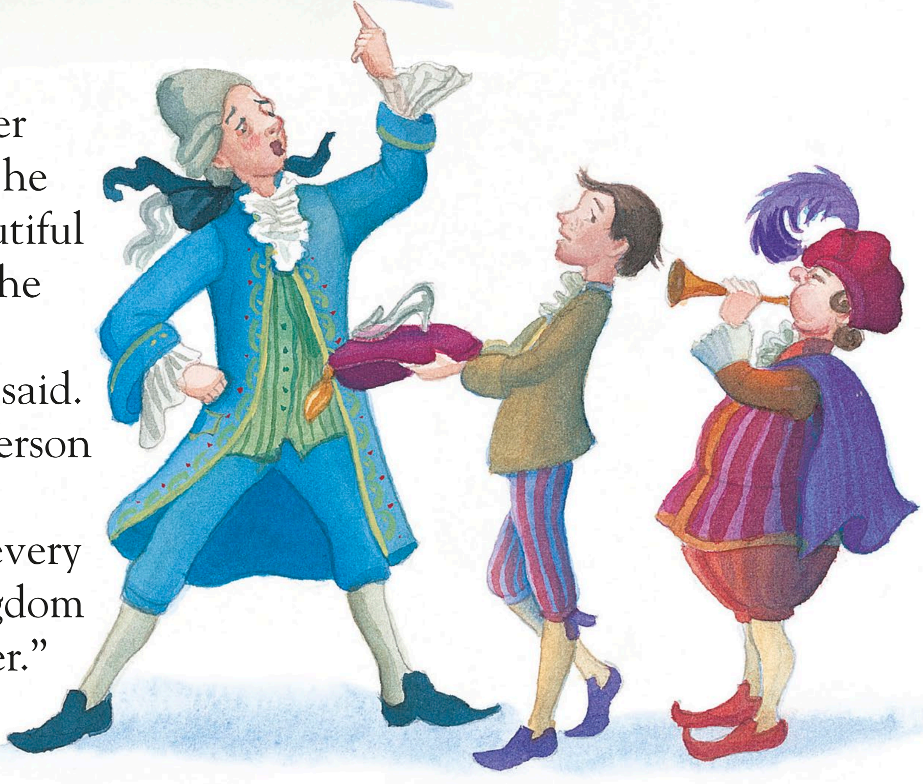
The prince was just as curious as everyone else. From the moment Cinderella came into the ballroom, he danced with no one else.

By the end of the evening, he was madly in love with his beautiful "princess," and he didn't even know her name. And Cinderella was just as much in love with the prince.

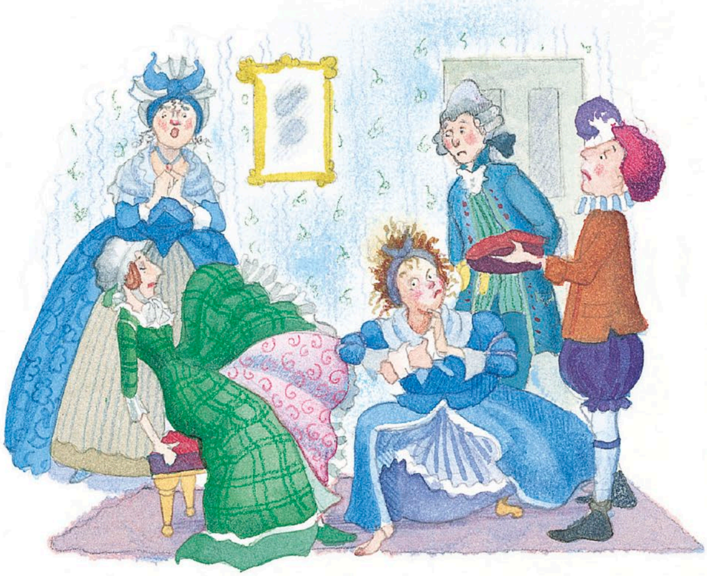
But as they were dancing, Cinderella suddenly heard the chimes of the palace clock. "Oh no!" she cried. "It must be midnight."



Cinderella ran away from the prince, out of the ballroom, and down the palace steps, losing one of her glass slippers along the way. By the time she reached the bottom step, the clock had finished striking twelve and Cinderella was in rags again.

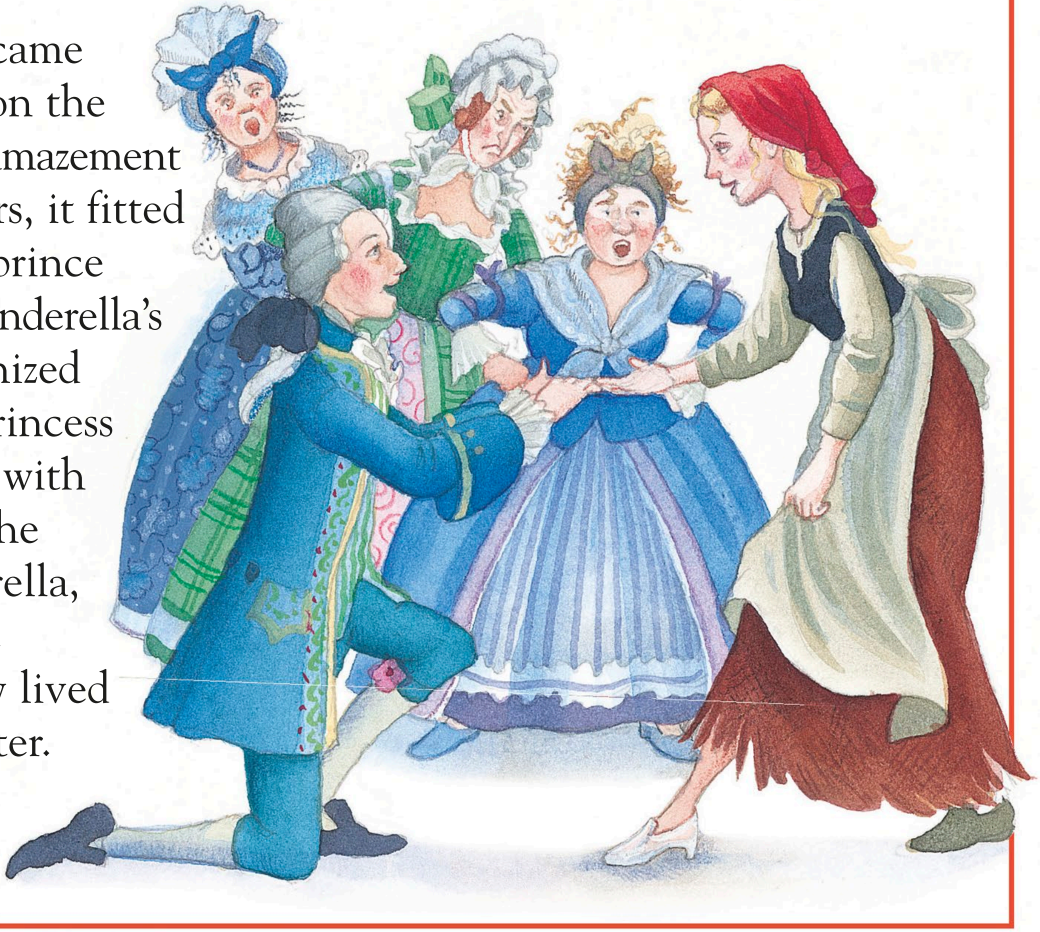


The prince ran after Cinderella, but all he found was the beautiful glass slipper from the steps. “Send out a proclamation!” he said. “I will marry the person whose foot fits this slipper! We’ll ask every woman in the kingdom to try on the slipper.”



So the prince went to every house in the kingdom, and soon he came to the house where Cinderella lived with her stepsisters. Of course, the ugly sisters were very eager to try their luck. But no matter how hard they pushed their big feet into the glass slipper, it didn't fit.

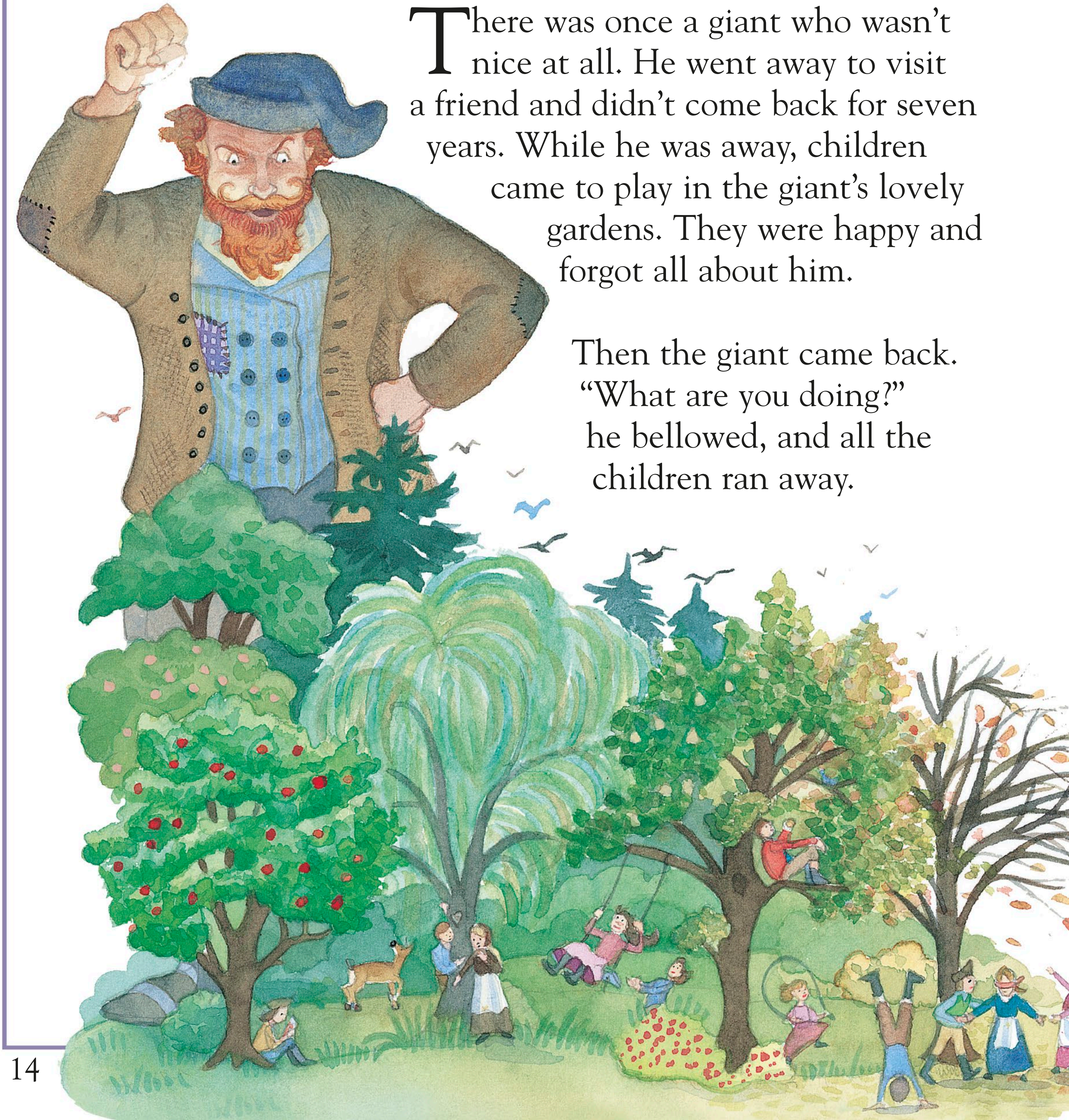
So Cinderella came forward to try on the slipper. To the amazement of her stepsisters, it fitted perfectly. The prince looked up at Cinderella's face and recognized the beautiful princess he had danced with at the ball. So he married Cinderella, and, unlike the stepsisters, they lived happily ever after.



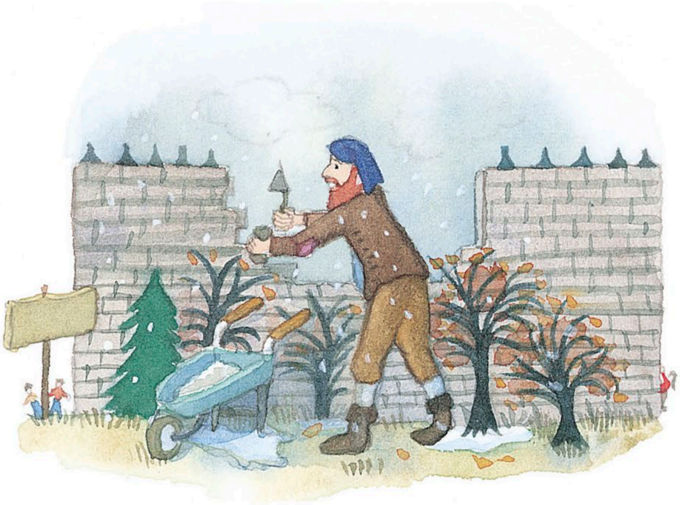
The Selfish Giant

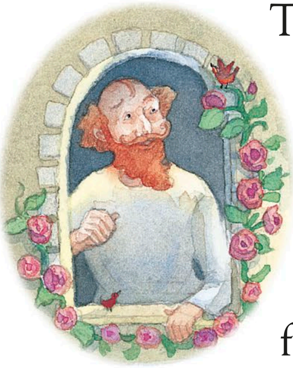
There was once a giant who wasn't nice at all. He went away to visit a friend and didn't come back for seven years. While he was away, children came to play in the giant's lovely gardens. They were happy and forgot all about him.

Then the giant came back. "What are you doing?" he bellowed, and all the children ran away.

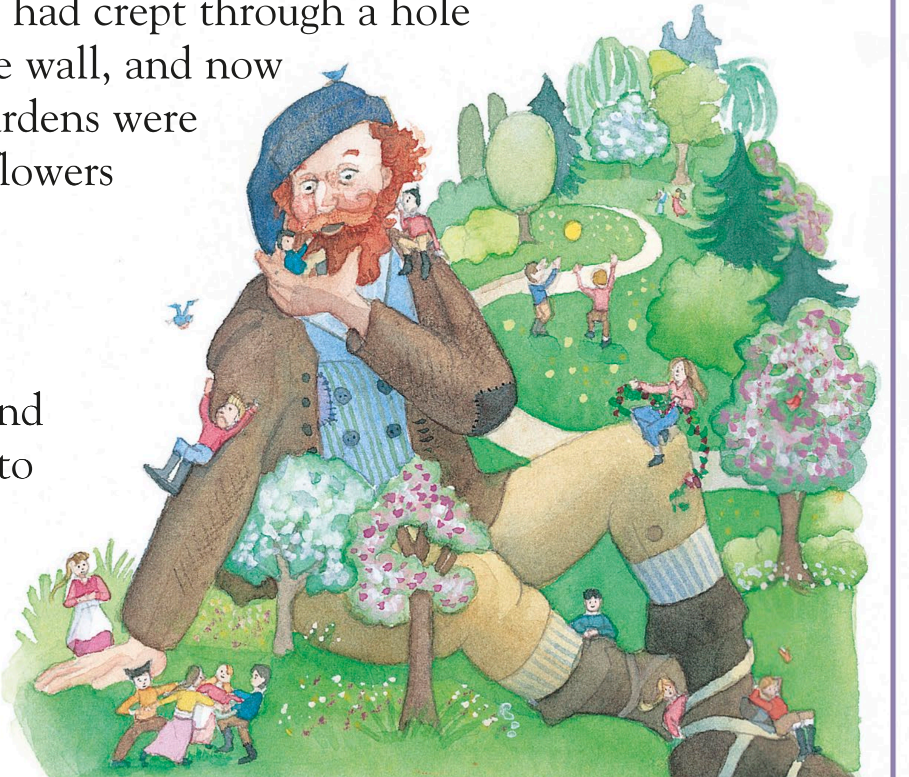


So the giant built a tall wall, and put up a notice, warning the children to keep out. At first the giant was pleased. Then he noticed that no birds came and sang in his gardens any more. And worse, it was always winter. The giant became sad.





Then one morning the song of a bird woke the giant. He looked out and saw that the children had come back. They had crept through a hole in the wall, and now the gardens were full of flowers and birds.



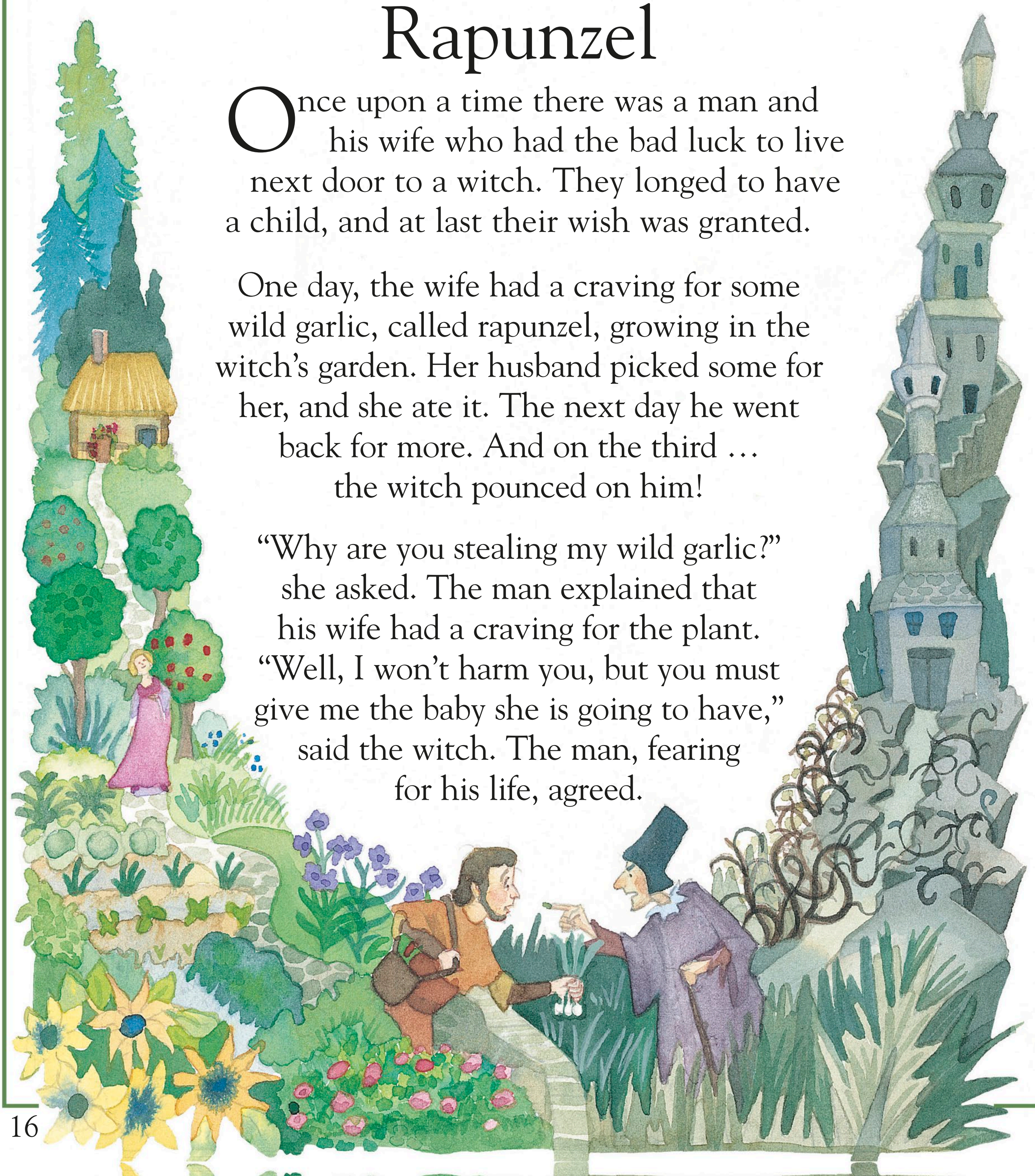
The giant tore down the wall and promised never to be selfish again.

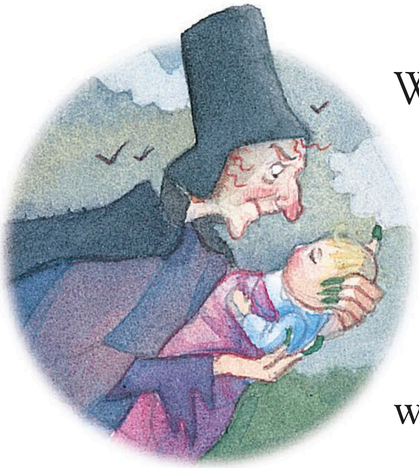
Rapunzel

Once upon a time there was a man and his wife who had the bad luck to live next door to a witch. They longed to have a child, and at last their wish was granted.

One day, the wife had a craving for some wild garlic, called rapunzel, growing in the witch's garden. Her husband picked some for her, and she ate it. The next day he went back for more. And on the third … the witch pounced on him!

"Why are you stealing my wild garlic?" she asked. The man explained that his wife had a craving for the plant. "Well, I won't harm you, but you must give me the baby she is going to have," said the witch. The man, fearing for his life, agreed.





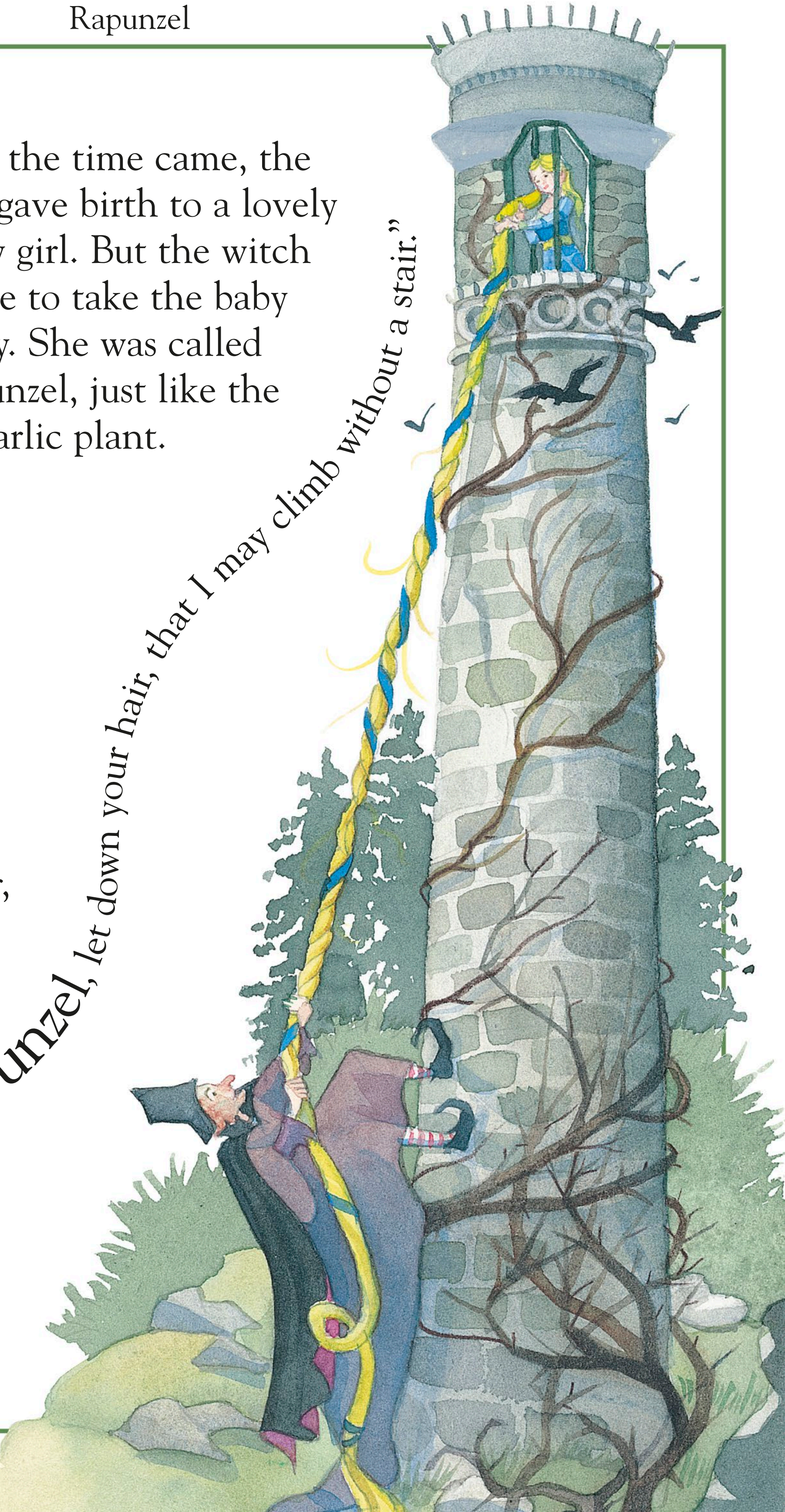
When the time came, the wife gave birth to a lovely baby girl. But the witch came to take the baby away. She was called Rapunzel, just like the wild garlic plant.

The witch brought up Rapunzel and, when she was twelve, locked her in a high tower that had no door or stairway.

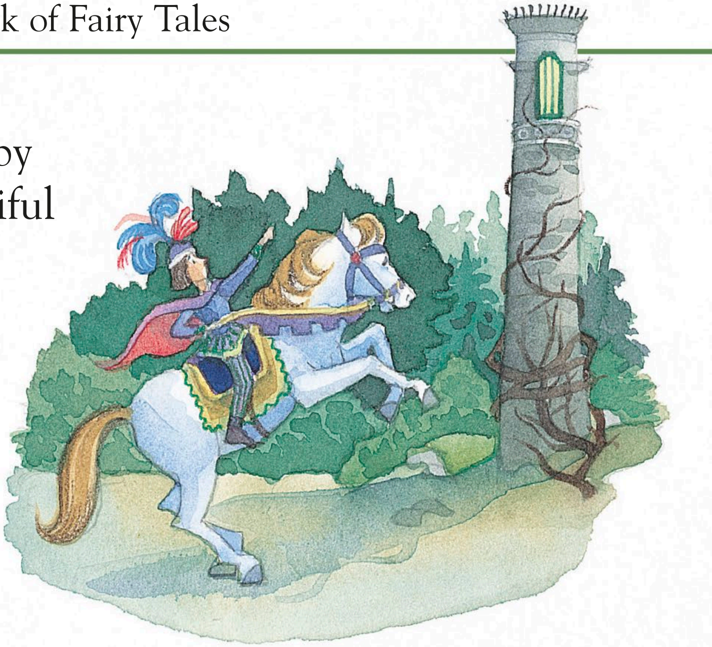
Rapunzel had beautiful, long hair, and when the witch wanted to visit her, she stood at the foot of the tower and sang,

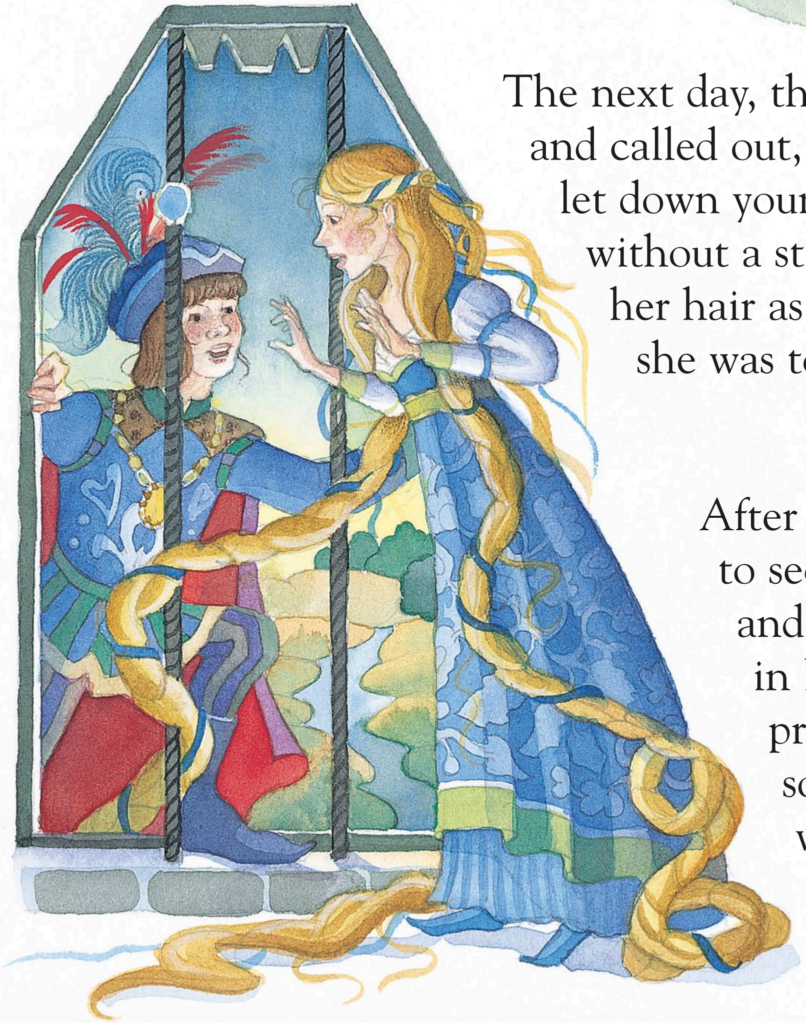
“Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair, that I may climb without a stair.”

And then she would climb up Rapunzel’s hair.



Years later, a prince was riding by the tower when he heard beautiful singing. He saw a lovely young woman at the window. Then he heard the witch's rusty voice calling, and watched her climb up the cascade of hair.

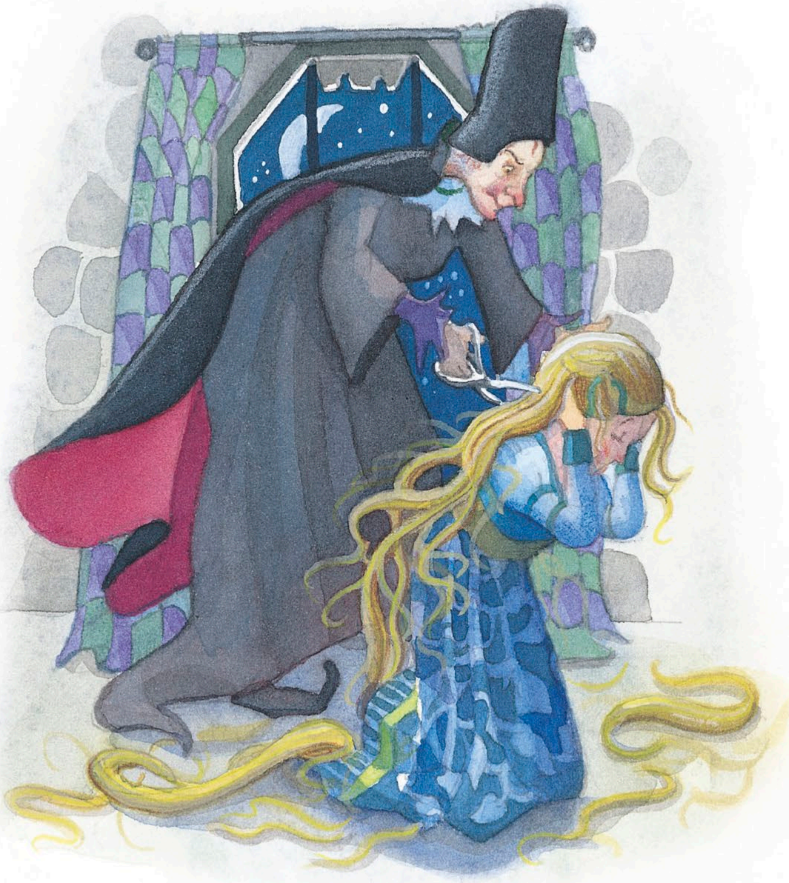




The next day, the prince came back and called out, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair, that I may climb without a stair." Rapunzel lowered her hair as usual, but how surprised she was to see the prince!

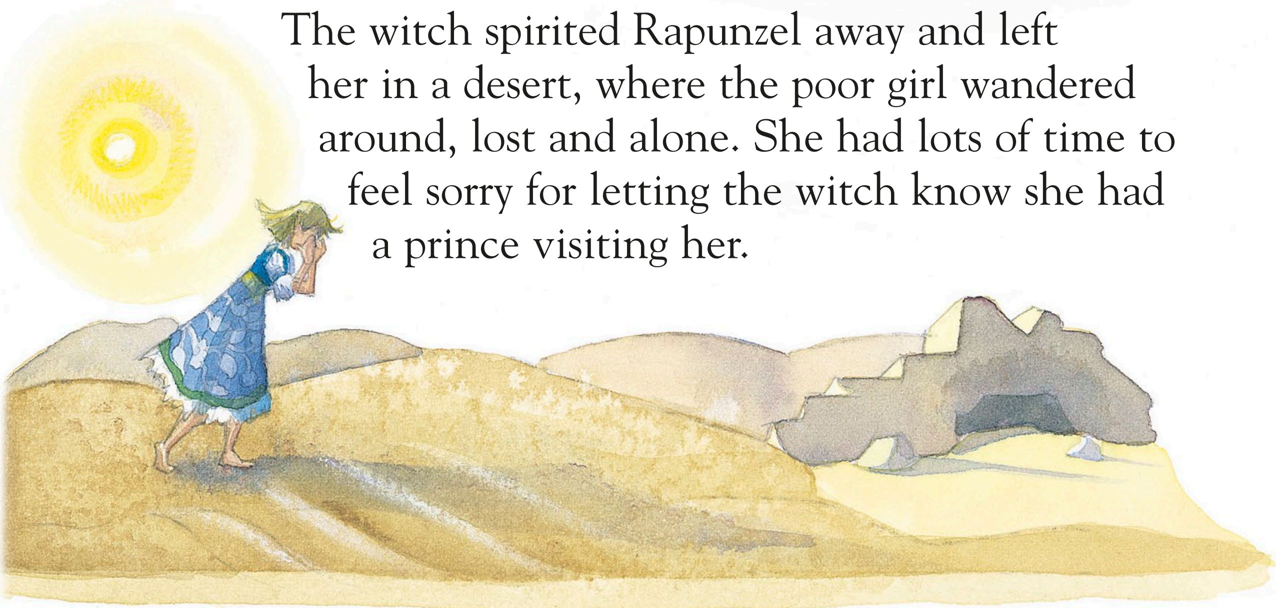
After that he came to see her every day, and soon they were in love. The prince promised to bring silk so that Rapunzel could weave a ladder and escape from the high tower.

But one day, silly Rapunzel said to the witch, “I wonder why you are so much heavier than the prince? It never hurts my hair so much when he climbs up to visit me.”

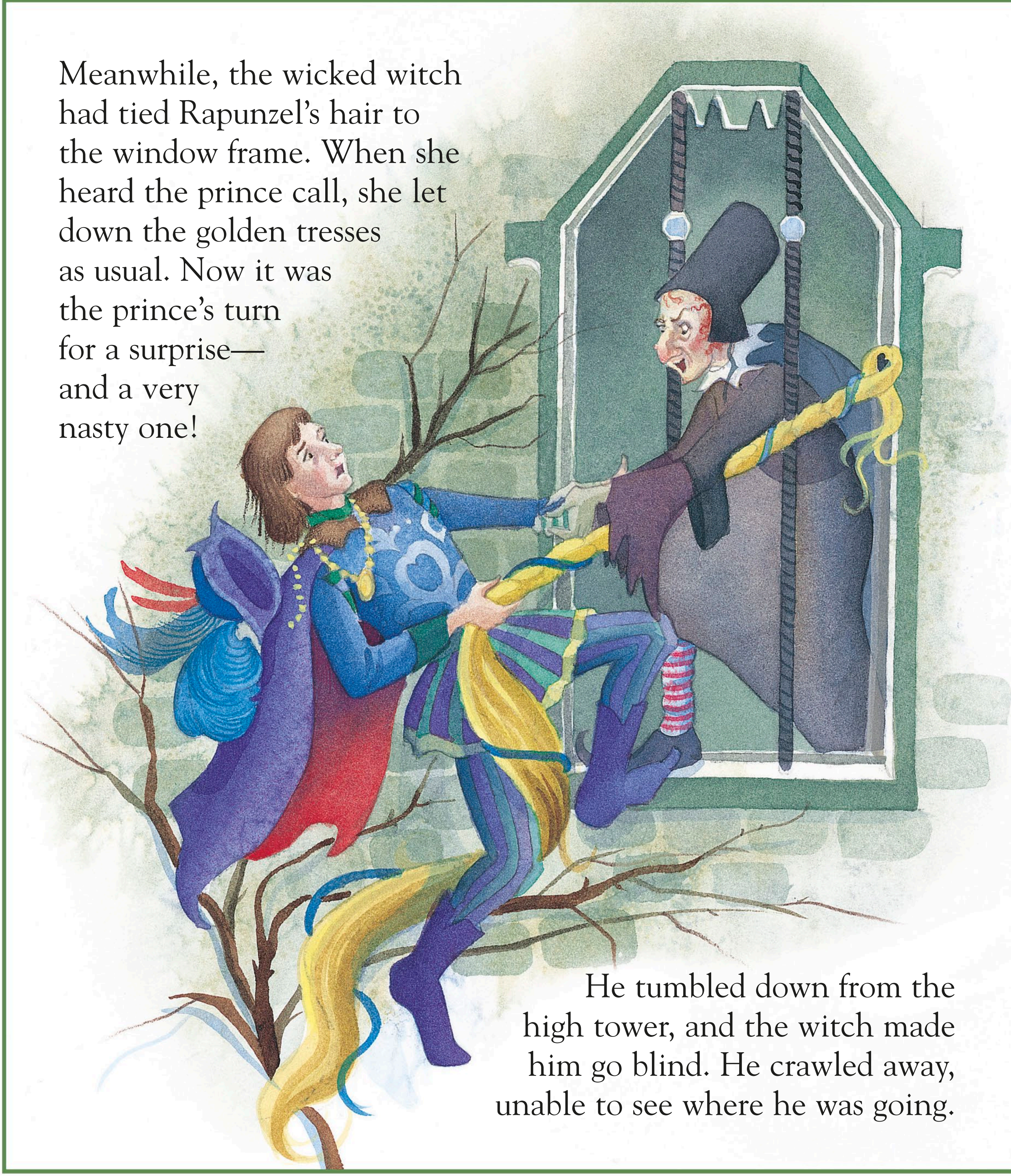


Snip, snap! The witch put an end to Rapunzel’s romance by cutting off her lovely, long hair. How sorry Rapunzel was for her foolishness!

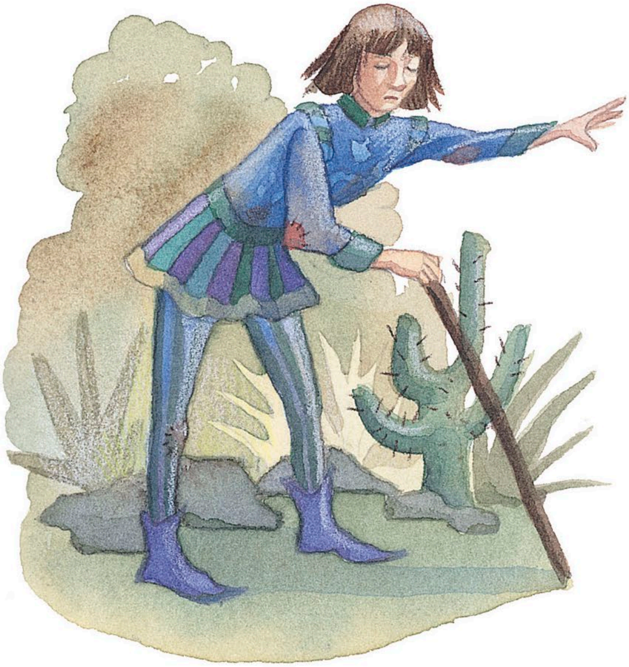
The witch spirited Rapunzel away and left her in a desert, where the poor girl wandered around, lost and alone. She had lots of time to feel sorry for letting the witch know she had a prince visiting her.



Meanwhile, the wicked witch had tied Rapunzel's hair to the window frame. When she heard the prince call, she let down the golden tresses as usual. Now it was the prince's turn for a surprise—and a very nasty one!



He tumbled down from the high tower, and the witch made him go blind. He crawled away, unable to see where he was going.



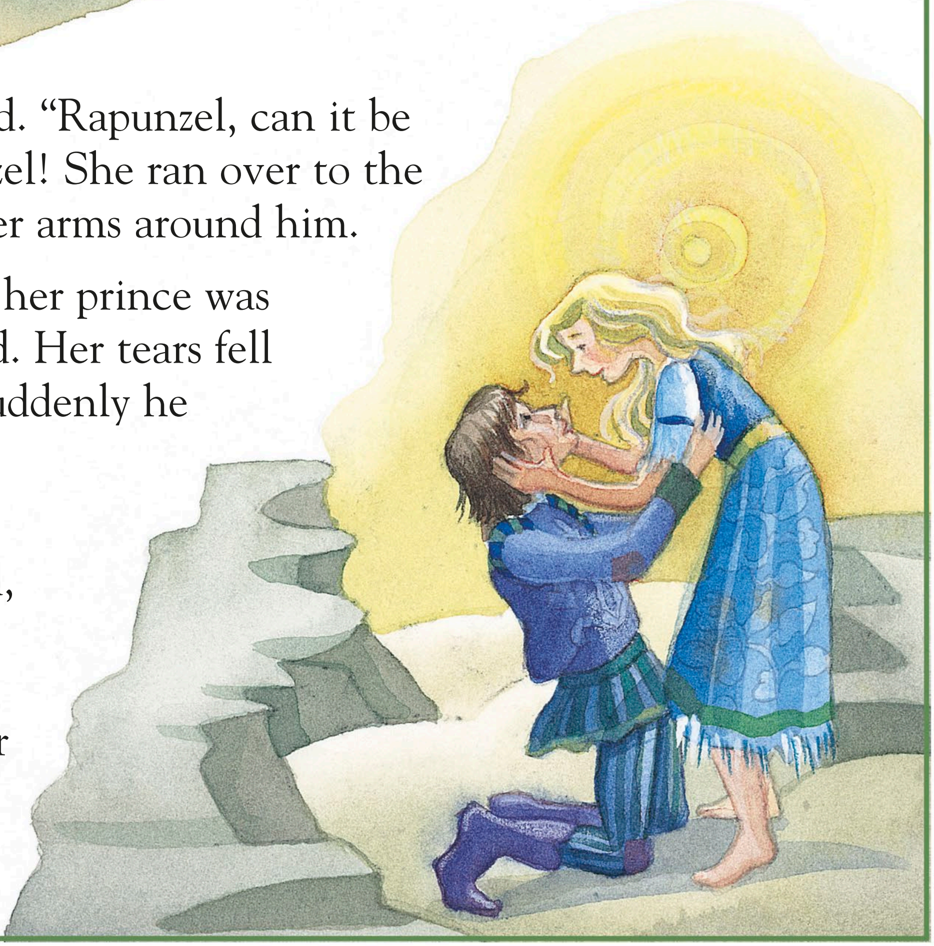
For years, the prince wandered around the world, searching for his lost love, Rapunzel.

After a long time, he found himself in a desert. He was hot, tired, and thirsty. And then he heard a lovely voice singing such a sad song that it made him weep.

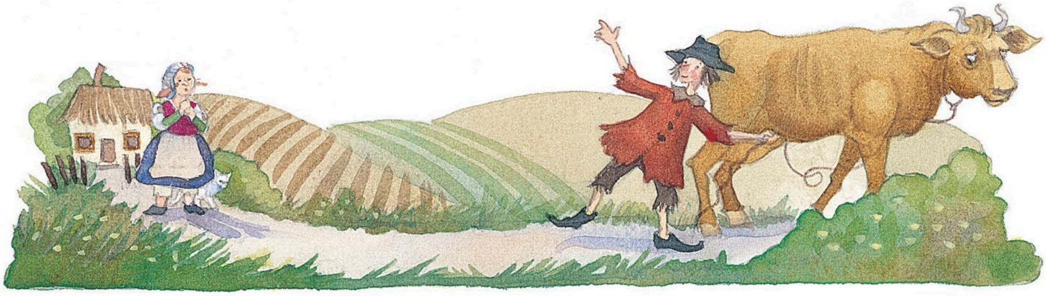
“Rapunzel!” he cried. “Rapunzel, can it be you?” It was Rapunzel! She ran over to the prince and threw her arms around him.

When she saw that her prince was now blind, she cried. Her tears fell into his eyes, and suddenly he could see again.

Rapunzel and her prince were married, and they never saw the witch again. And Rapunzel's hair grew almost as long as before!

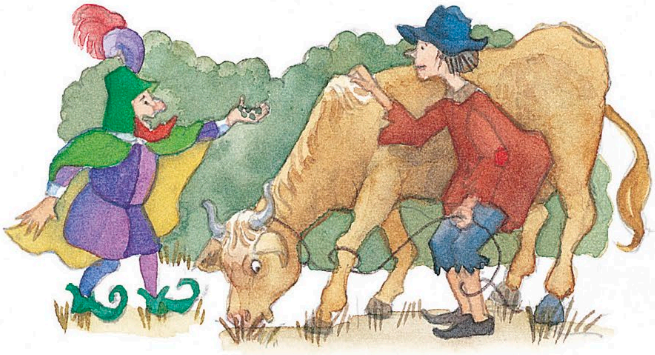


Jack and the Beanstalk

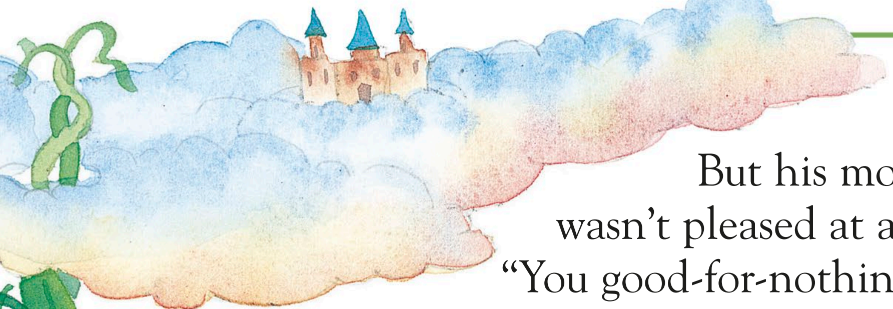


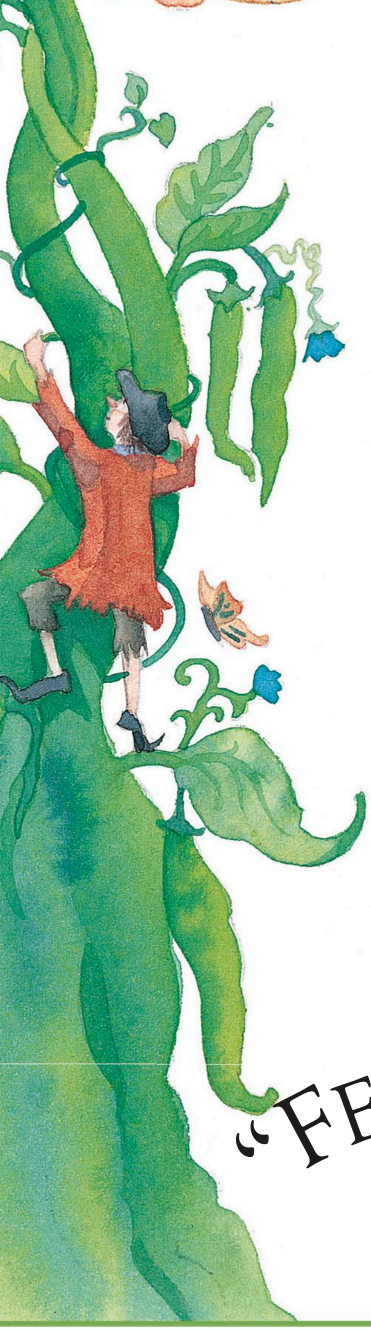
Many years ago there lived a woman and her son, called Jack. She gave him everything he asked for, until one day there was nothing left. All they had of any value was their old cow. So the woman sent Jack to sell her.

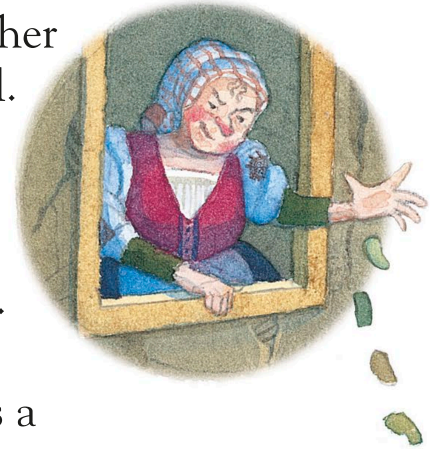
He hadn't gotten far when he met a strange little man.
"Where are you going with that cow?" he asked.
"To the market," said Jack.
"No need," said the man. "I'll give you these beans for her."
Jack was such a foolish fellow that he agreed.



"One—two—three—four—five beans," the stranger counted out. And Jack ran home to tell his mother.

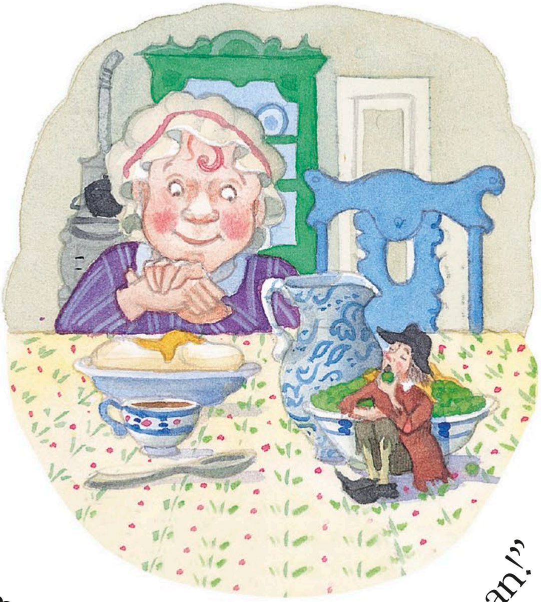






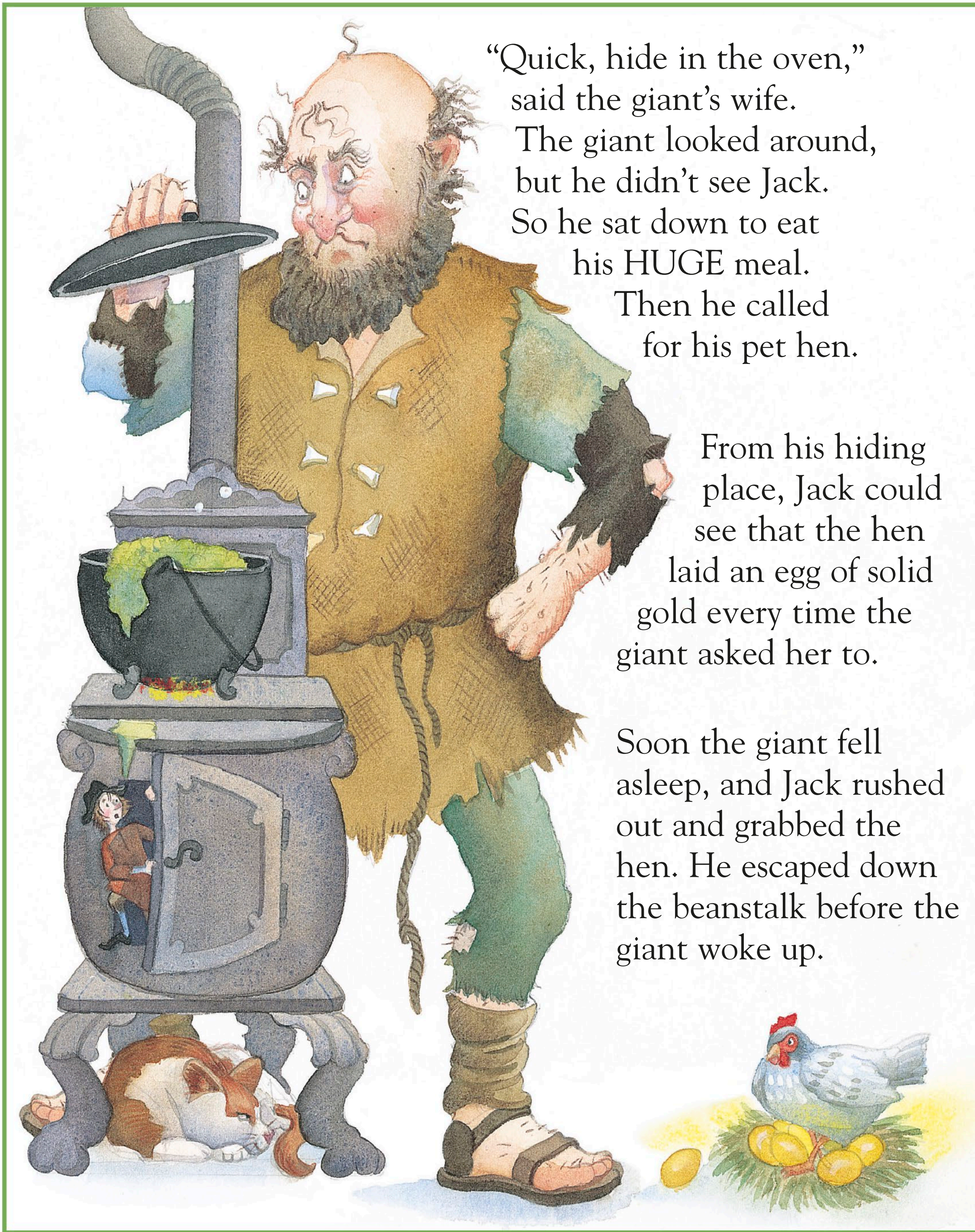
But his mother
wasn't pleased at all.
"You good-for-nothing
boy!" she shouted, and
threw Jack's beans
out of the window.

The next morning there was a marvelous beanstalk—as strong as an oak tree—growing right up to the sky. Without a thought, Jack climbed up it and found himself in another country.



He found a giant's castle and persuaded the giant's wife to feed him. But then he heard heavy footsteps and a loud voice saying,

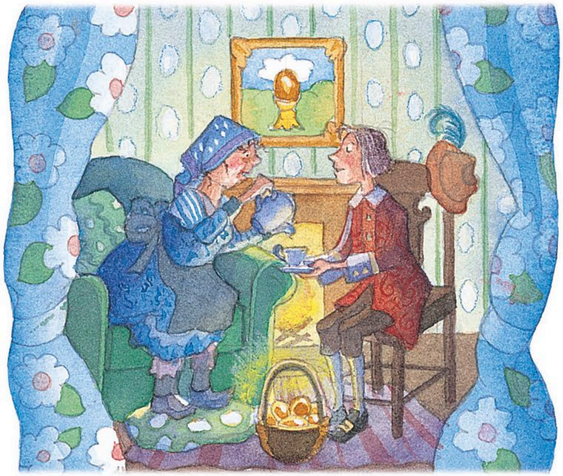
"FEE FI FO FUM! I smell the blood of an Englishman!"



"Quick, hide in the oven," said the giant's wife. The giant looked around, but he didn't see Jack. So he sat down to eat his HUGE meal. Then he called for his pet hen.

From his hiding place, Jack could see that the hen laid an egg of solid gold every time the giant asked her to.

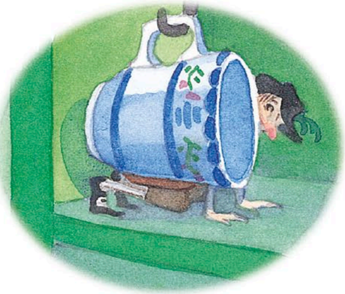
Soon the giant fell asleep, and Jack rushed out and grabbed the hen. He escaped down the beanstalk before the giant woke up.



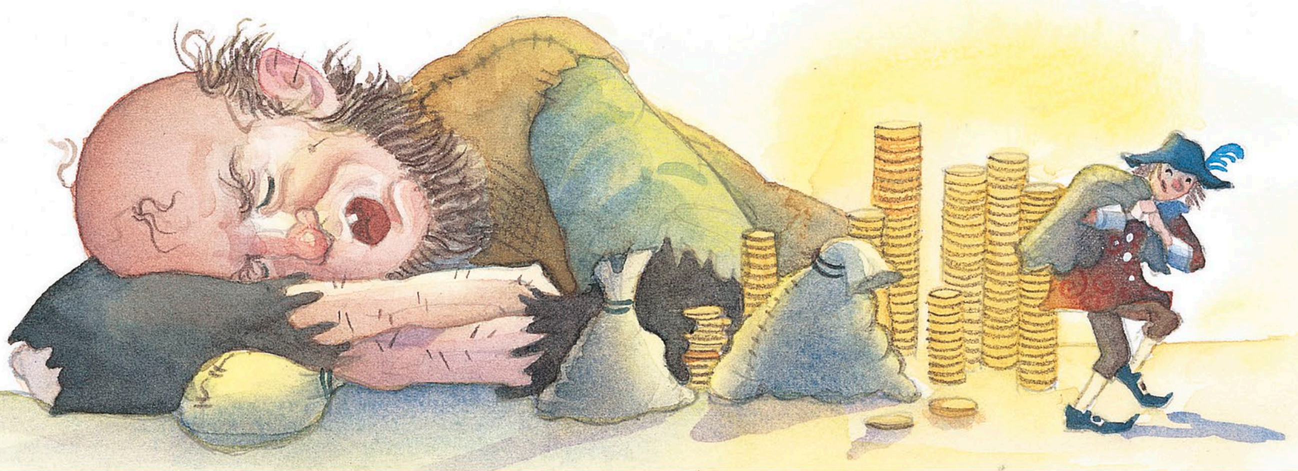
Jack's mother was very relieved to see him, and they lived well by selling the golden eggs.

But the beanstalk was still there, tempting Jack. Then one day, without telling his mother, Jack climbed the huge beanstalk again.

Everything happened as before.
The giant roared, "FEE FI FO FUM!
I smell the blood of an Englishman!"
This time Jack hid in a cupboard.
And again the giant couldn't find Jack.

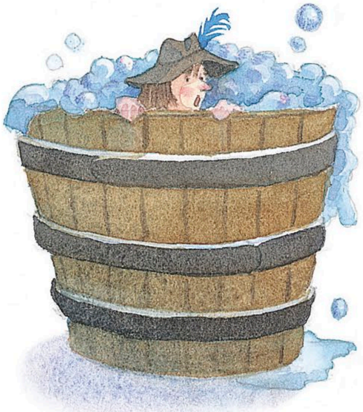


After dinner, the giant got out his money bags and counted his coins. But soon he was asleep and snoring. Quickly, Jack grabbed a bag and slid back down the beanstalk.

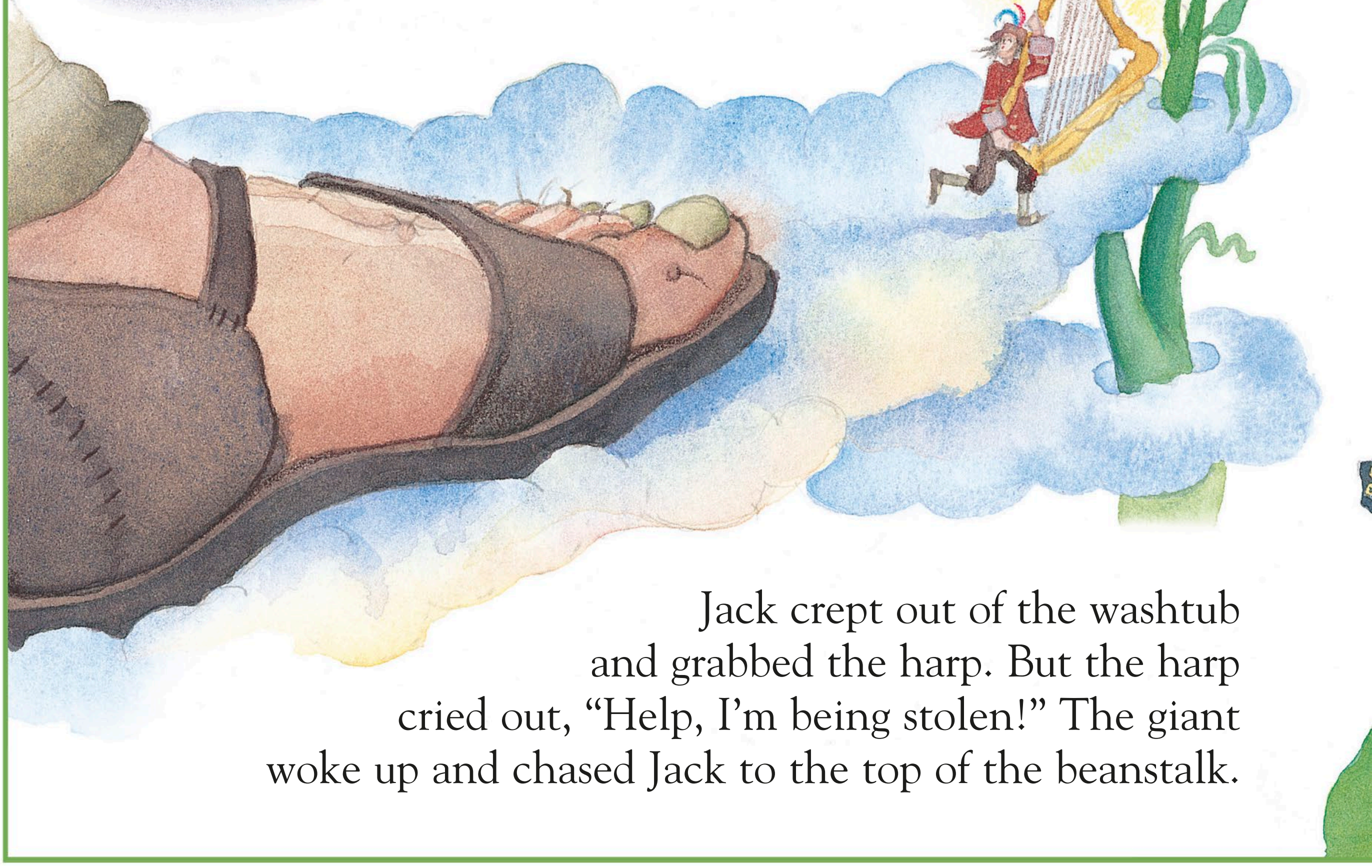


Three years later, Jack climbed the beanstalk again. This time he hid in a washtub when the giant roared,

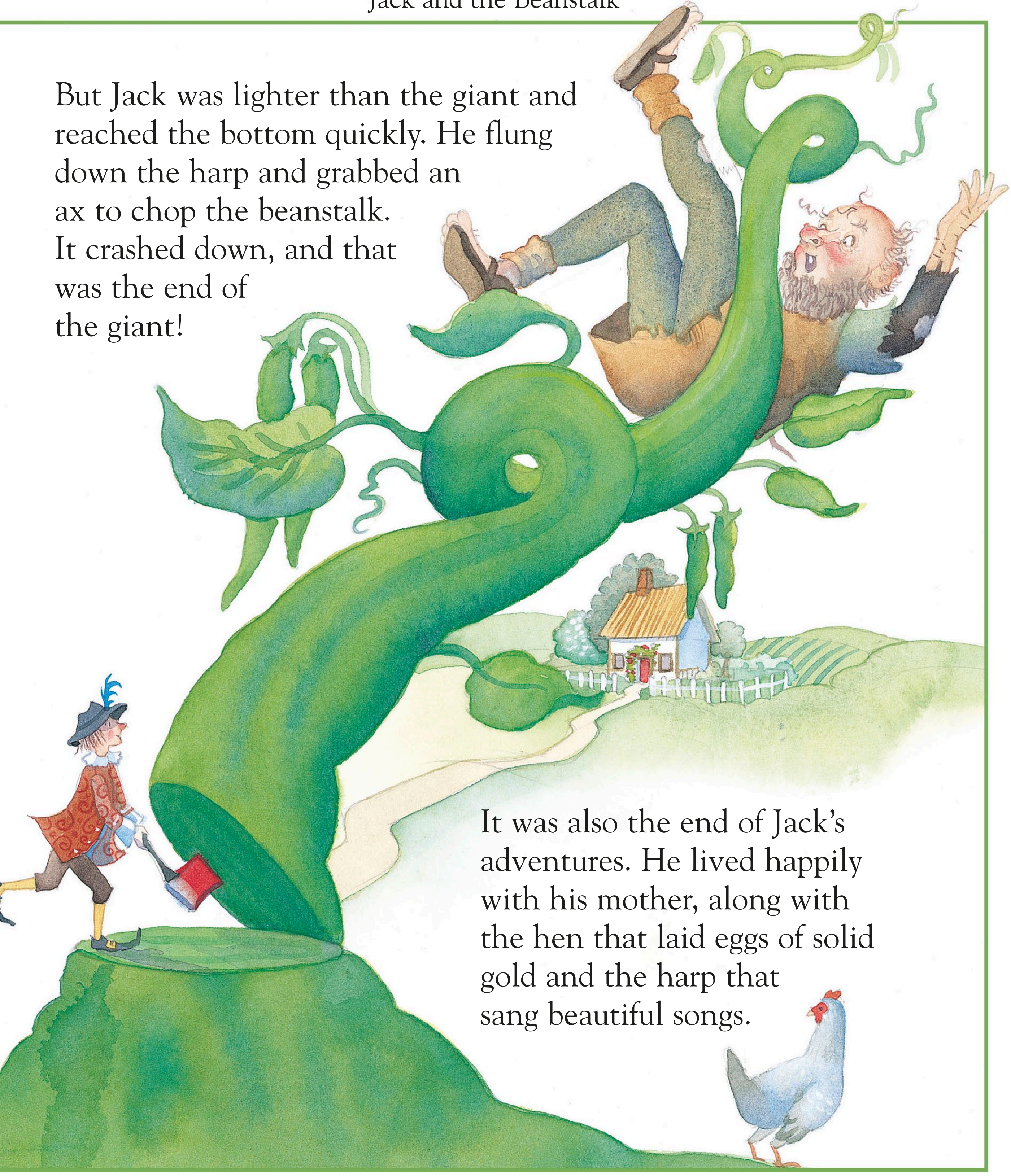
"FEE FI FO FUM! I smell the blood of an Englishman!"



The giant looked for Jack, but didn't find him. Then the giant asked his wife to get the golden harp. Soon he fell asleep.



Jack crept out of the washtub and grabbed the harp. But the harp cried out, "Help, I'm being stolen!" The giant woke up and chased Jack to the top of the beanstalk.

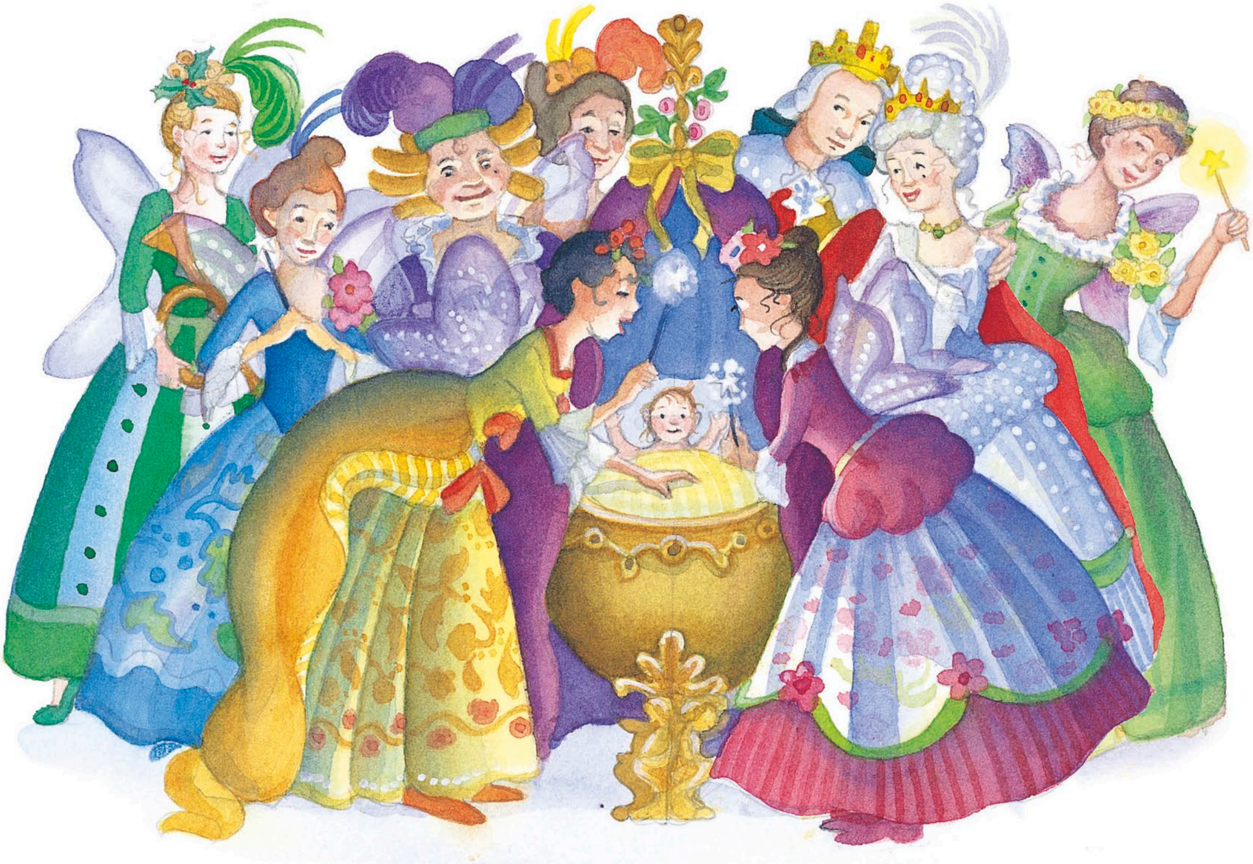


But Jack was lighter than the giant and reached the bottom quickly. He flung down the harp and grabbed an ax to chop the beanstalk. It crashed down, and that was the end of the giant!

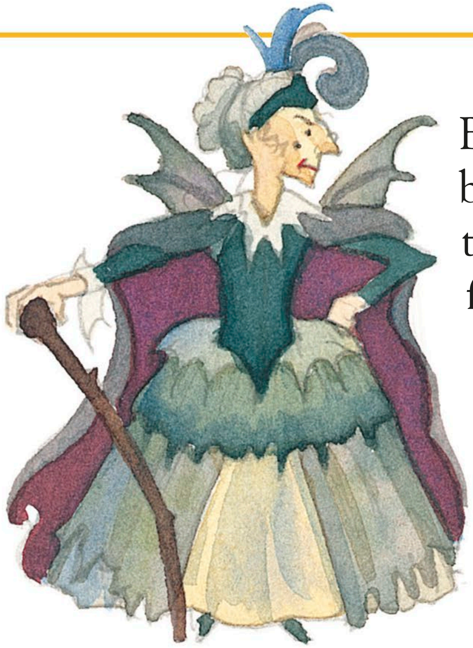
It was also the end of Jack's adventures. He lived happily with his mother, along with the hen that laid eggs of solid gold and the harp that sang beautiful songs.

Sleeping Beauty

There was once a king and queen who waited a long time to have a child. When at last the queen gave birth to a baby girl, they were so excited that they held a big party to celebrate her christening.

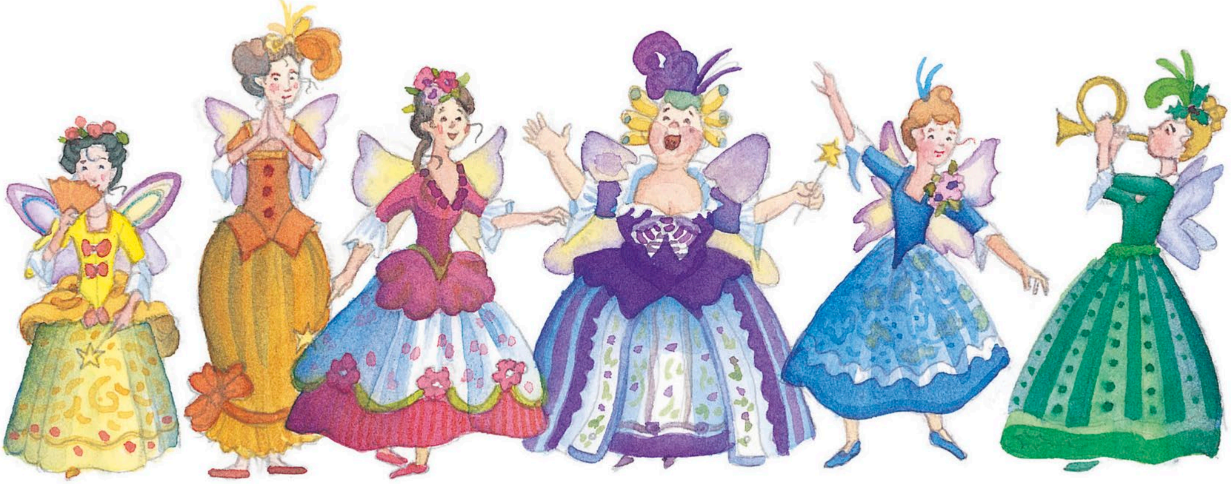


The king and queen invited all seven fairies in their kingdom, who came with very special presents for the baby. The king had solid-gold plates, knives, and forks made for them.

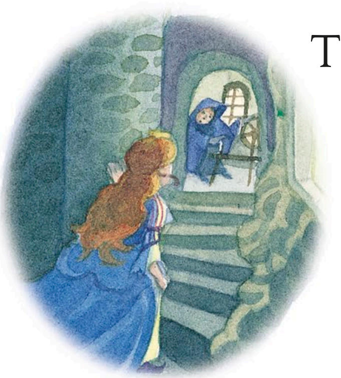


But there was an eighth fairy who had been forgotten. She came stomping into the castle. Quickly, the servants laid a place for her at the table, but the plate, knife, and fork weren't made of gold! One of the younger fairies, sensing trouble, hid as soon as it was time to give the presents.

The first fairy gave the princess the gift of beauty, the second gave good temper, the third gave grace, the fourth gave a wonderful singing voice, and the fifth and sixth fairies bestowed gifts of dance and music.

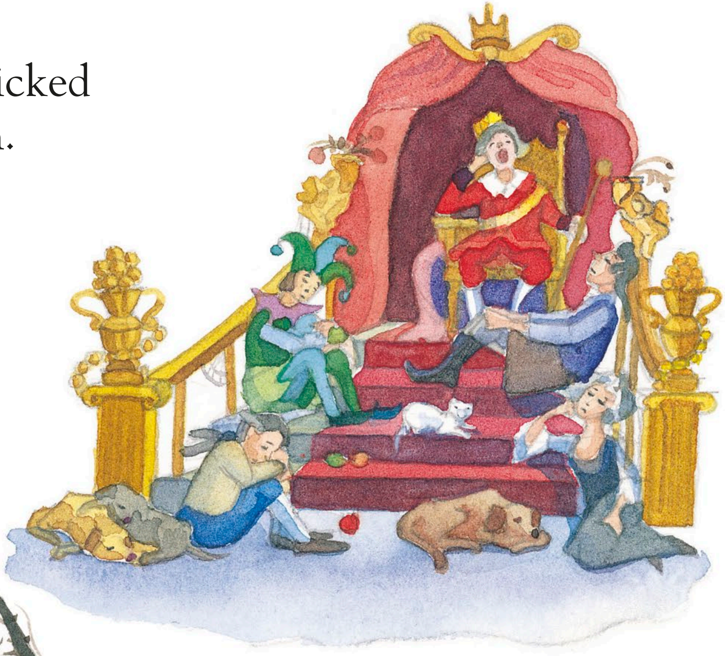


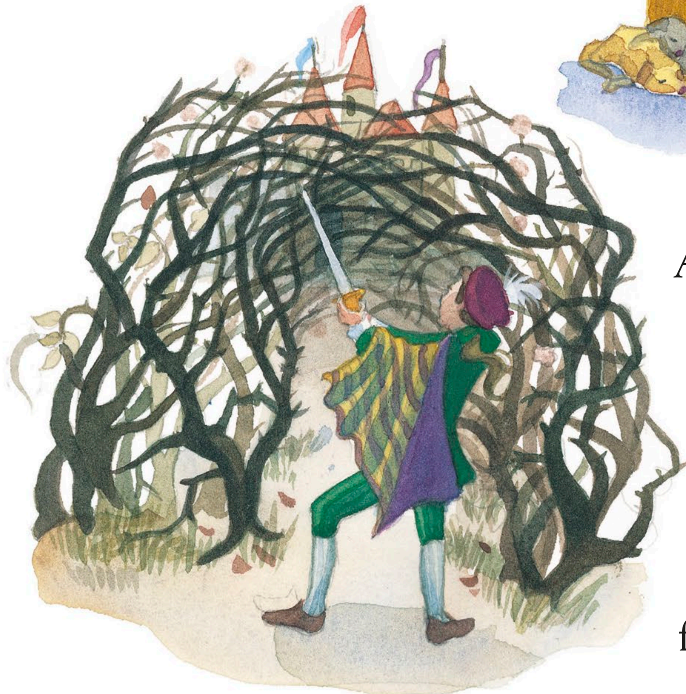
Then the angry fairy said, "And when she is sixteen, she will prick her finger and die!" Imagine everyone's horror! But the young fairy in hiding came out and said, "She will not die. She will fall asleep—and so will all the court. After a hundred years, a prince will wake up our little princess with a kiss."



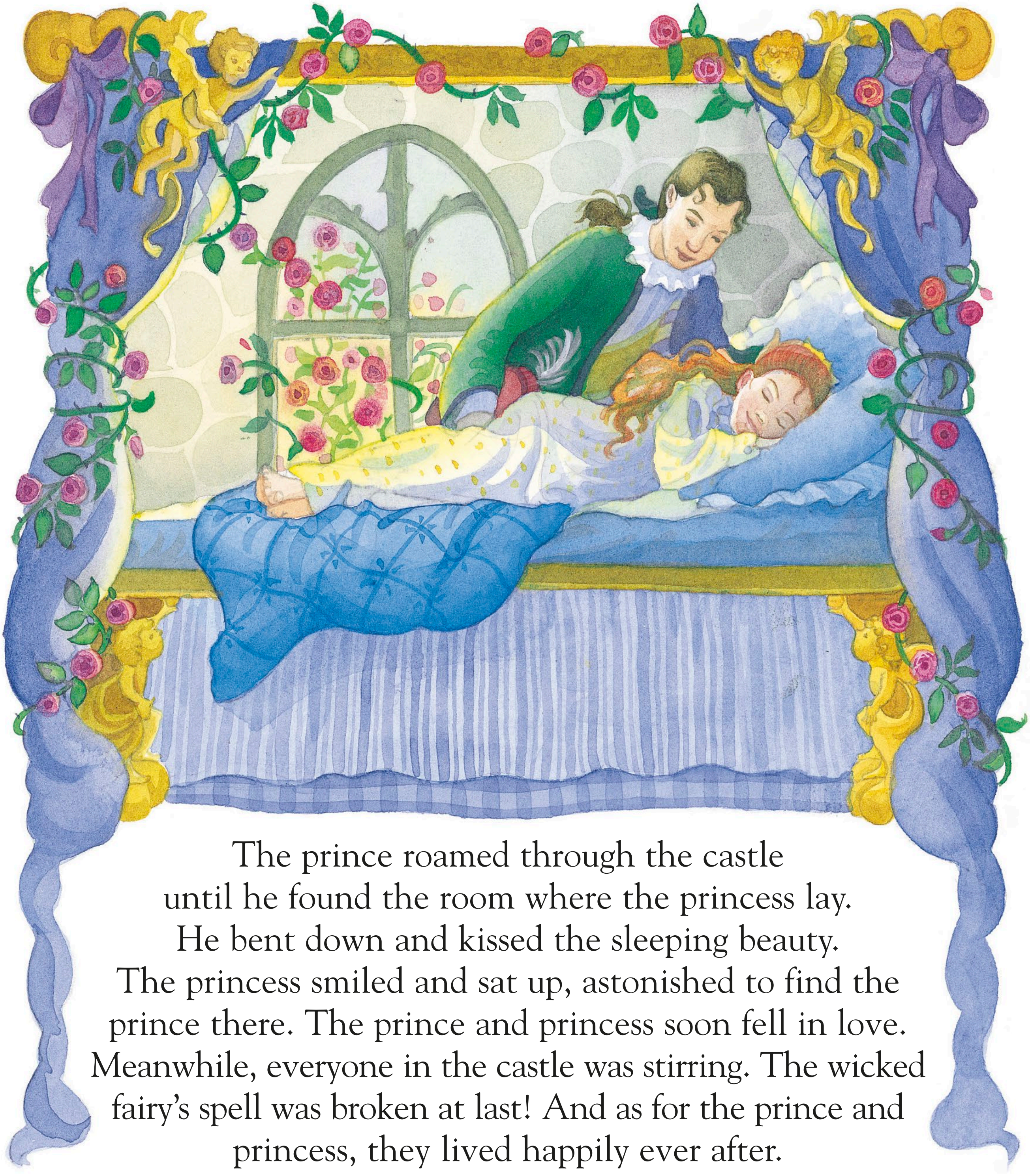
The next day, the king banned all needles from the kingdom. But when the princess was sixteen, she stumbled across a secret staircase in the castle. At the top was a woman spinning at a wheel. The princess had never seen a spinning wheel and wanted to touch it.

Immediately, the spindle pricked her finger and she fell down. Her parents found her and laid her on the best bed in the castle. Then they fell asleep, too, along with the servants, cats, and dogs.





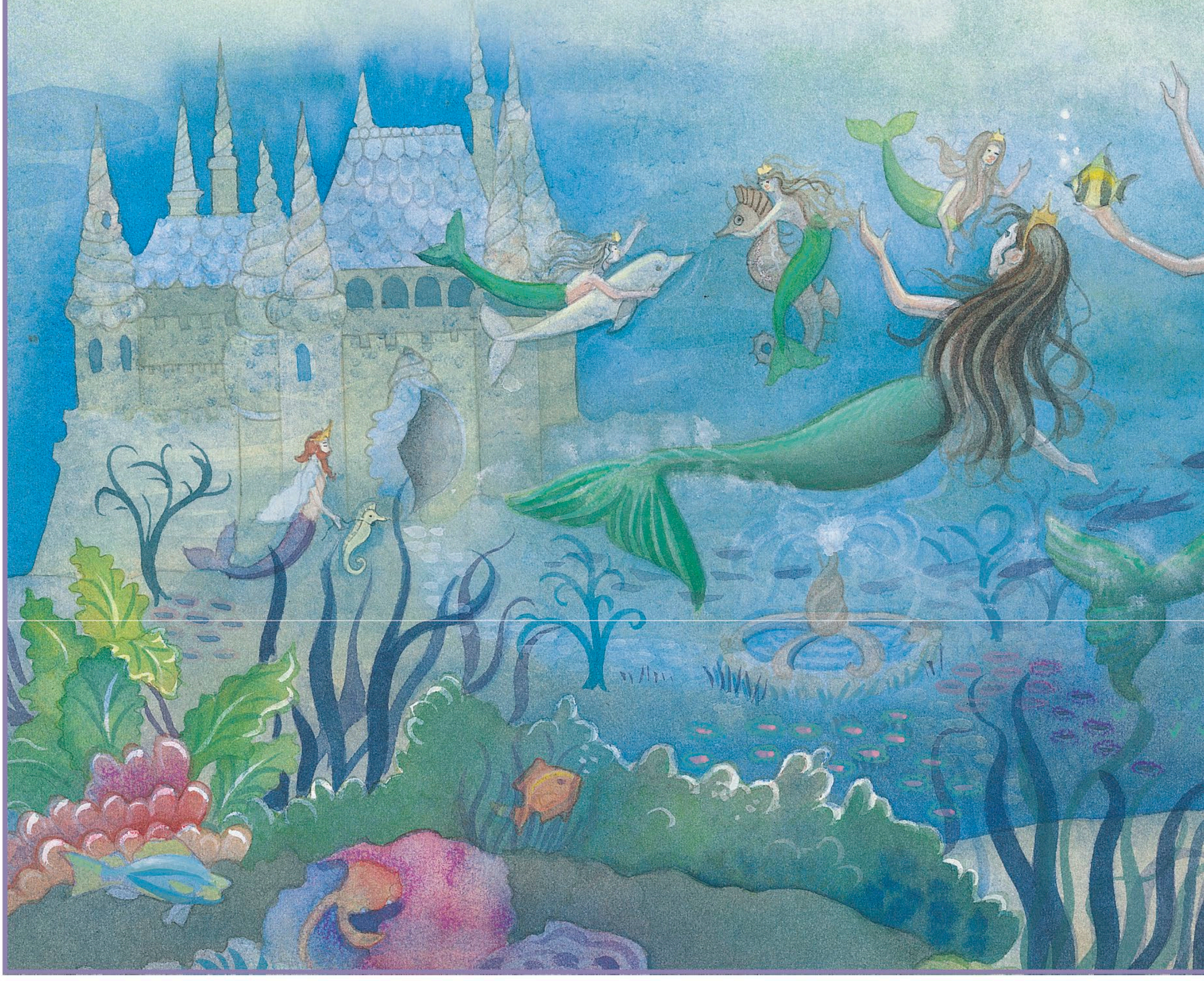
A hundred years had passed, when a young prince found a huge hedge of thorny roses. As he touched them with his sword, they sprang apart. Behind the hedge was a castle. The prince went inside—and found everyone fast asleep!



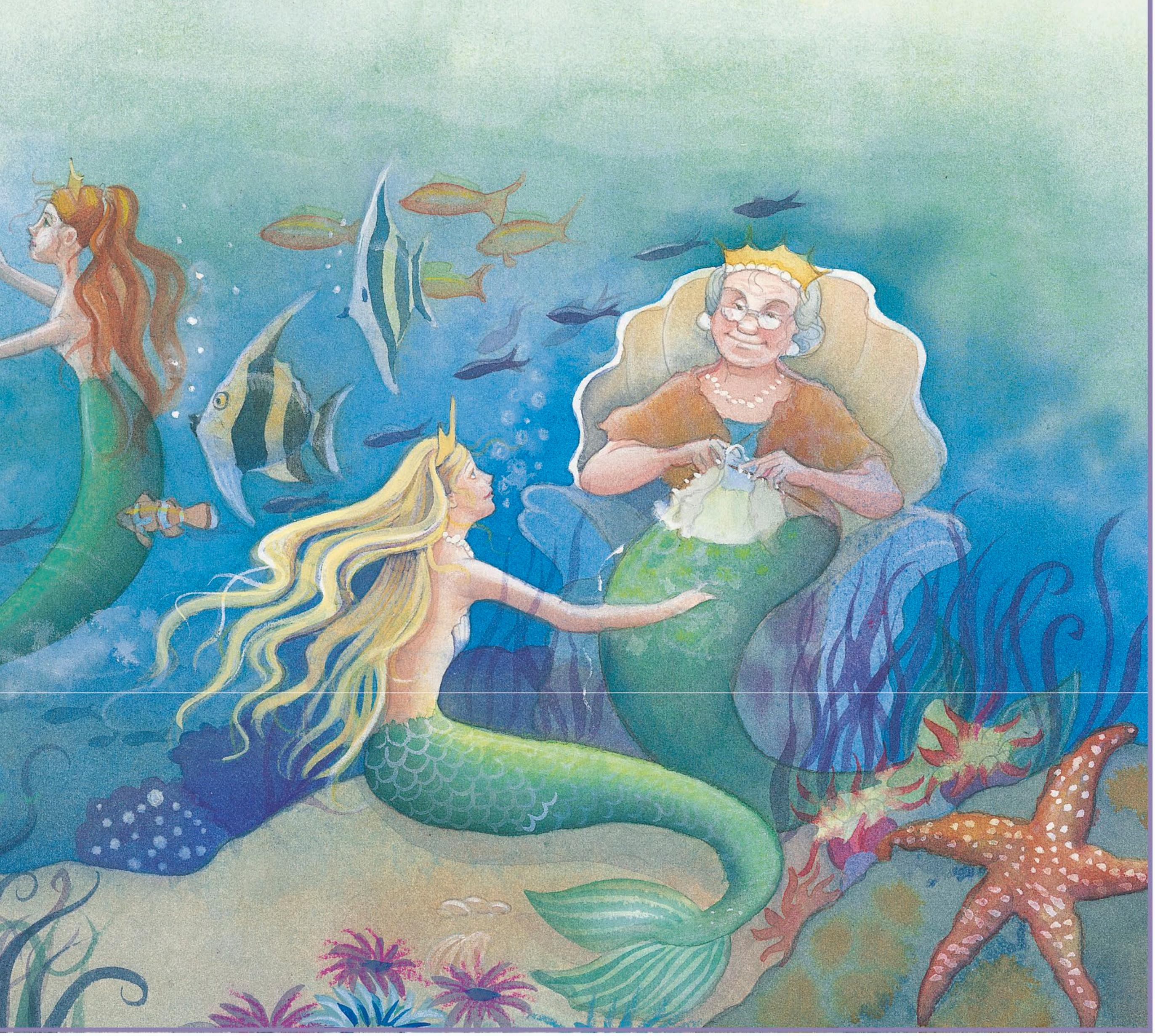
The prince roamed through the castle
until he found the room where the princess lay.
He bent down and kissed the sleeping beauty.
The princess smiled and sat up, astonished to find the
prince there. The prince and princess soon fell in love.
Meanwhile, everyone in the castle was stirring. The wicked
fairy's spell was broken at last! And as for the prince and
princess, they lived happily ever after.

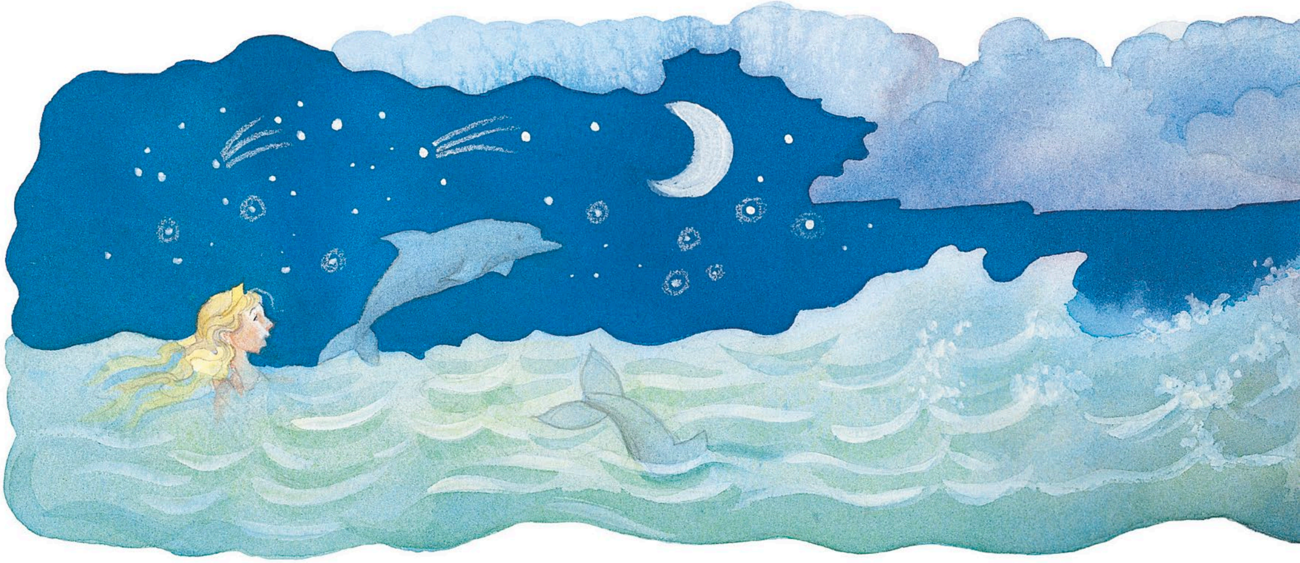
The Little Mermaid

In the depths of the ocean, where the water is bluest, is the kingdom of the mer-people. It was here that the mer-king lived with his old mother and his daughters, the six mer-princesses, in the most beautiful palace you could imagine.

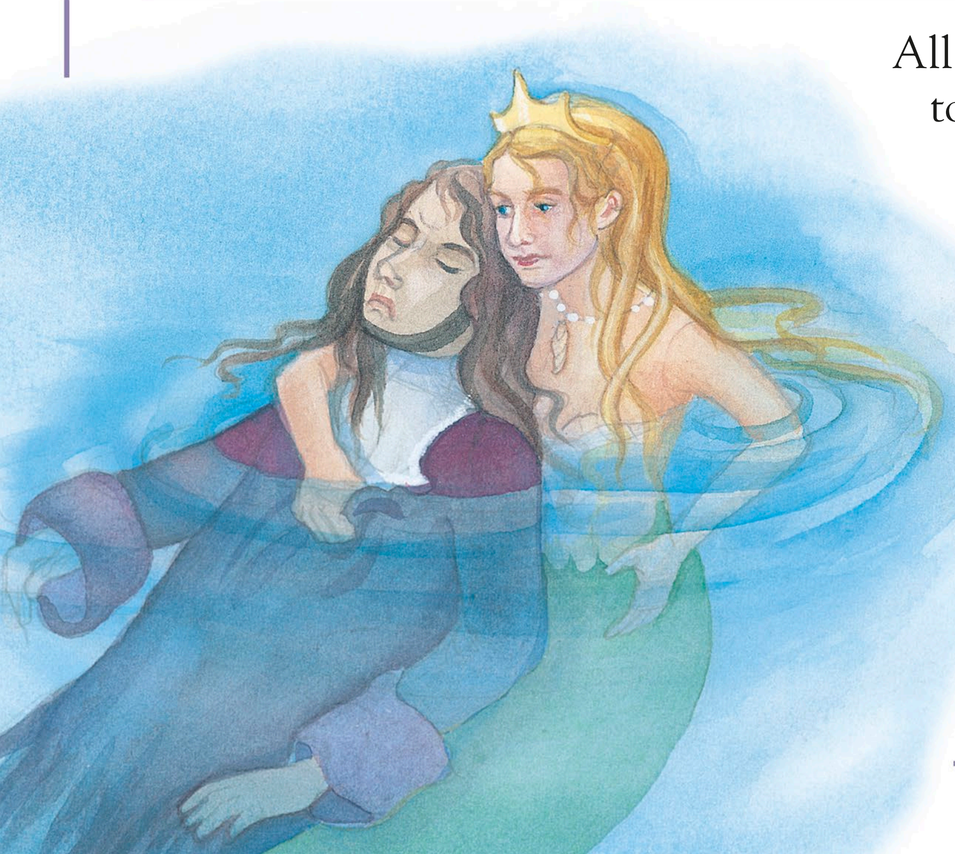


One by one, when they reached their fifteenth birthday, the princesses were allowed to visit the world above the water. The youngest princess couldn't wait for her turn to come. At last, when it was her fifteenth birthday, her grandmother said it was time for her to visit the human world.

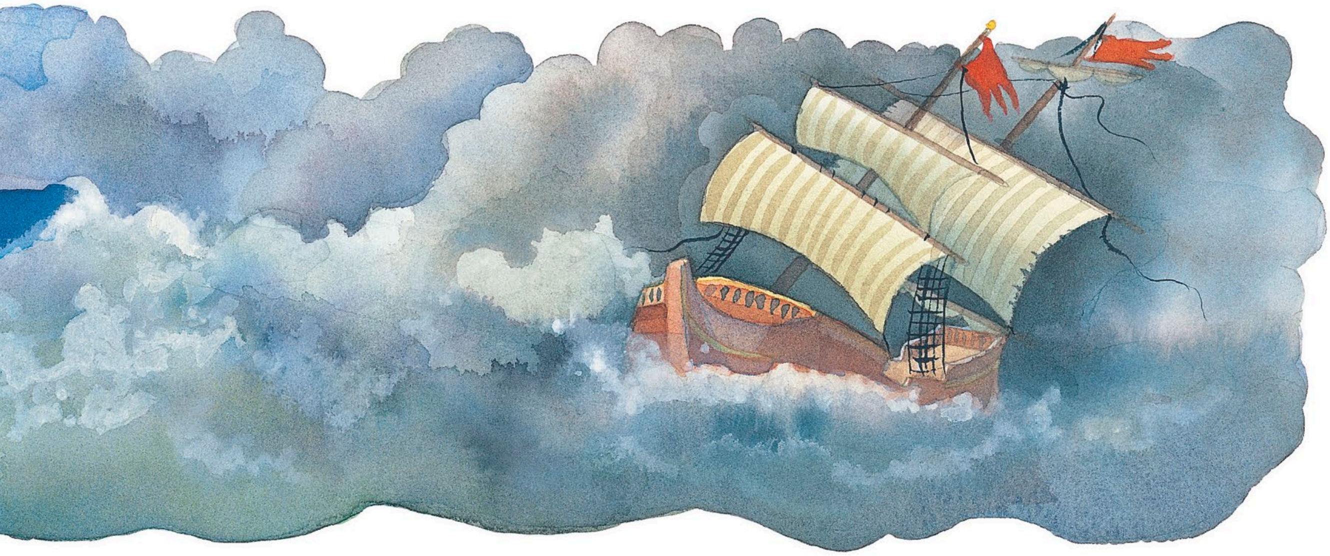




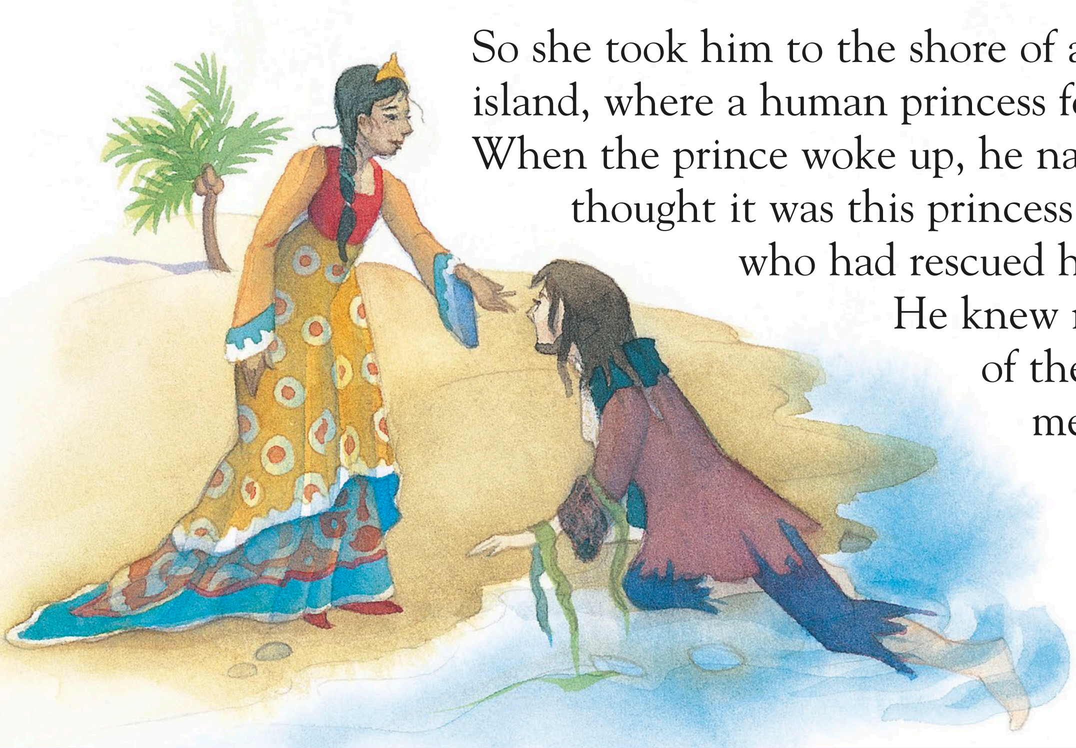
The little mermaid rose above the foam and caught her breath in surprise. The world was so very much more wonderful than she had imagined.



All those on board were tossed into the water. The prince would surely have drowned if the little mermaid hadn't caught him in her arms. But she knew she couldn't take him back to her kingdom.

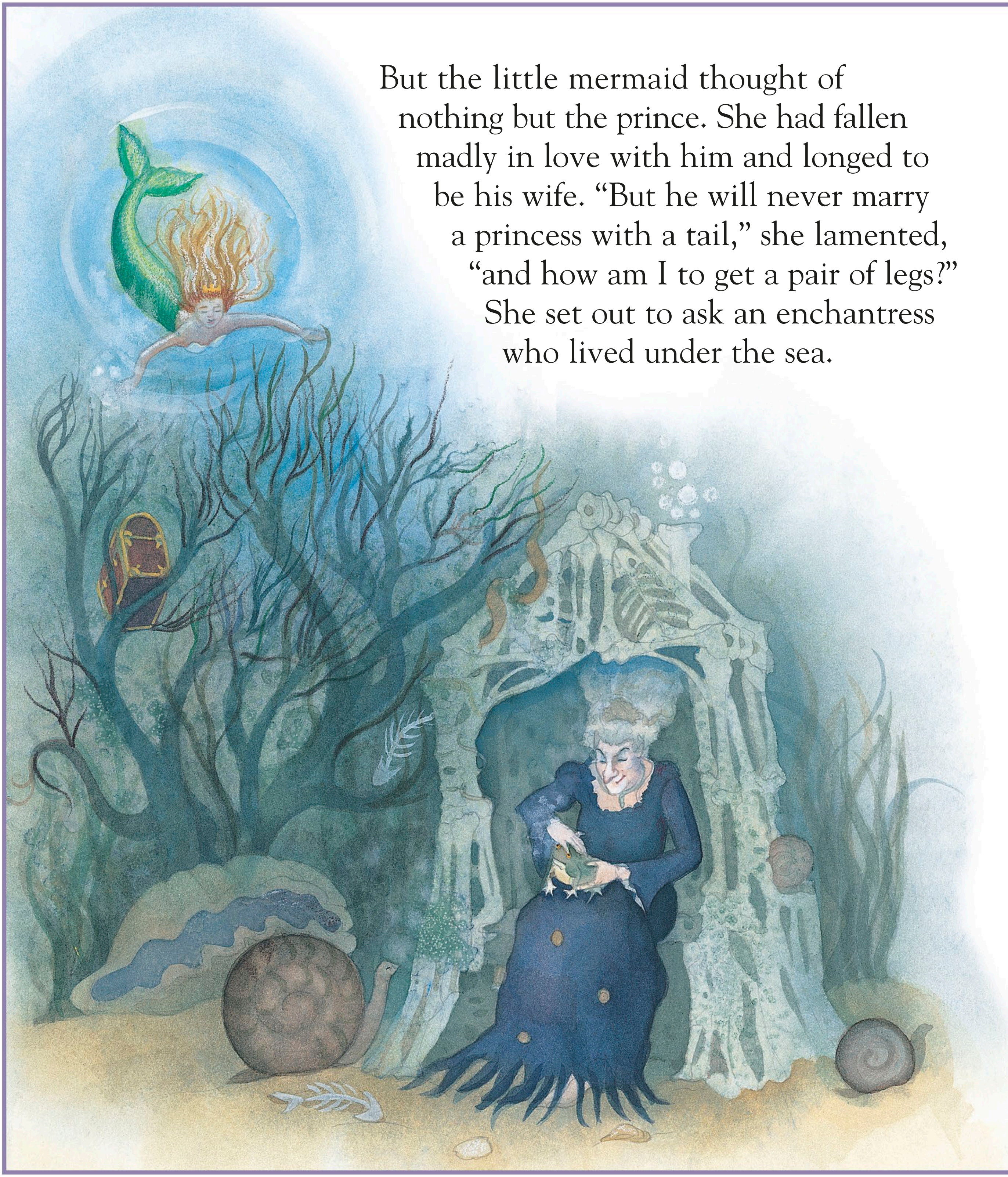


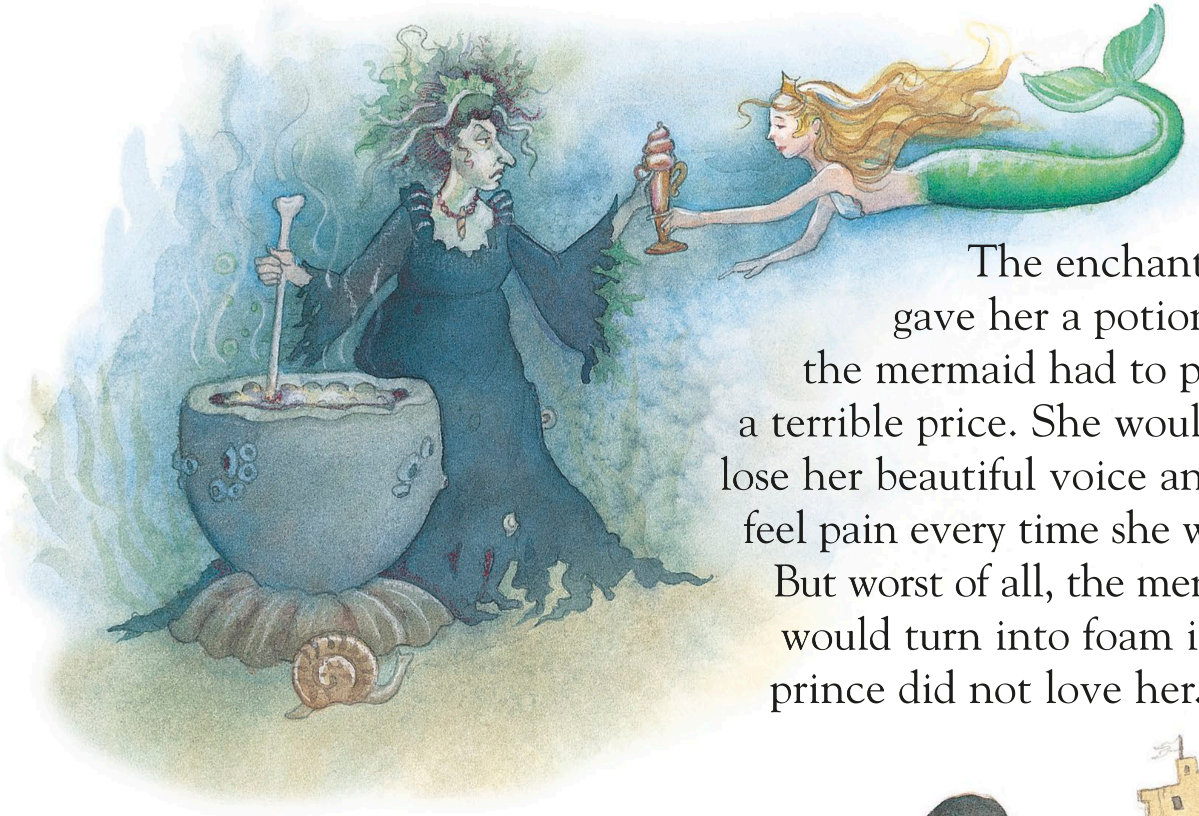
The first thing she saw was a huge ship. And on board there was a birthday party for a handsome prince. But while the little mermaid watched, a terrible storm blew up.



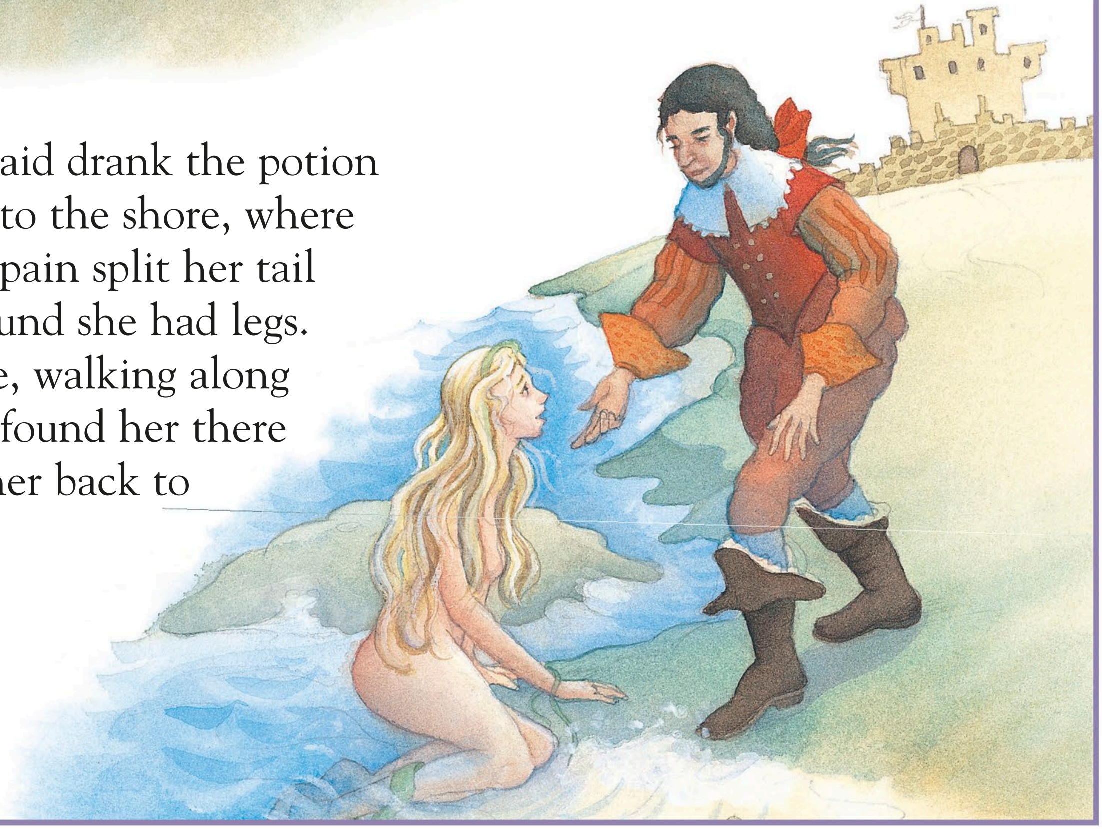
So she took him to the shore of an island, where a human princess found him. When the prince woke up, he naturally thought it was this princess who had rescued him. He knew nothing of the little mermaid.

But the little mermaid thought of nothing but the prince. She had fallen madly in love with him and longed to be his wife. "But he will never marry a princess with a tail," she lamented, "and how am I to get a pair of legs?" She set out to ask an enchantress who lived under the sea.

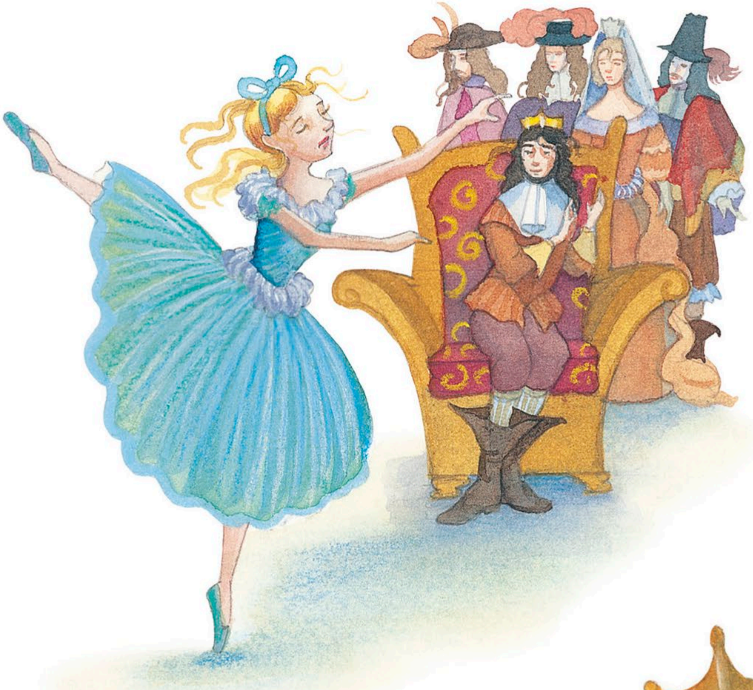




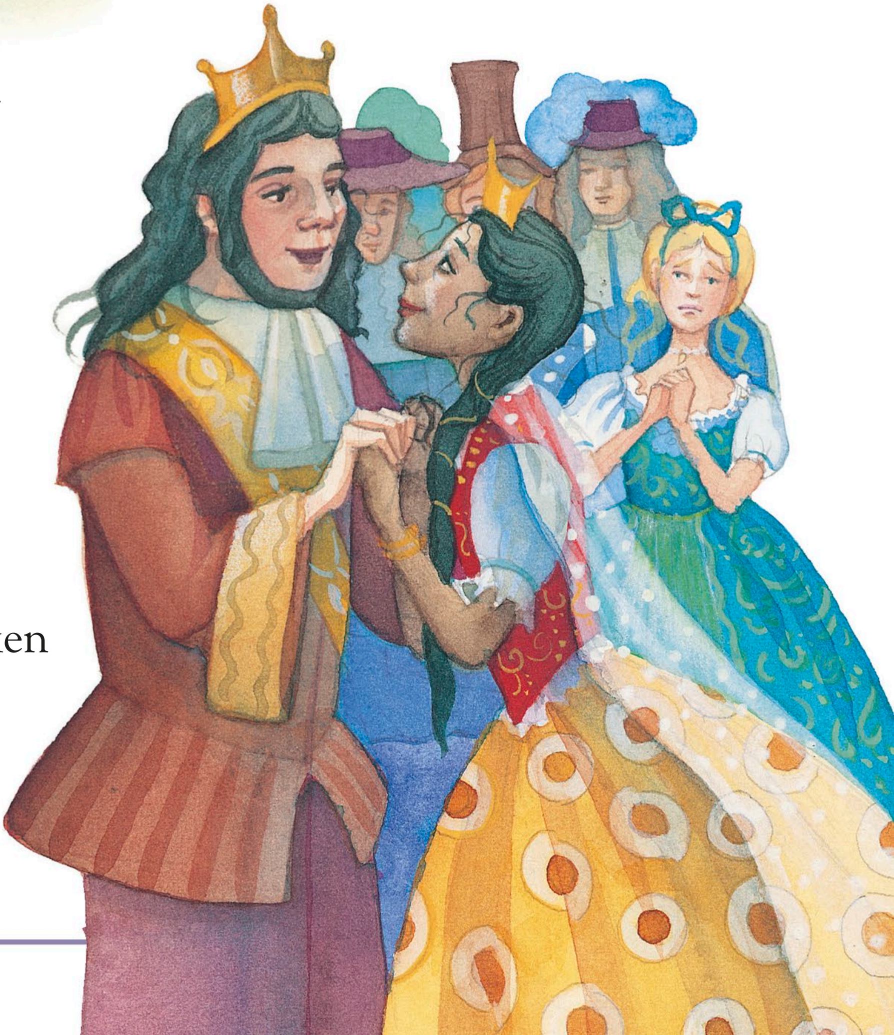
The enchantress gave her a potion, but the mermaid had to pay a terrible price. She would lose her beautiful voice and feel pain every time she walked. But worst of all, the mermaid would turn into foam if the prince did not love her.



The mermaid drank the potion and swam to the shore, where a dreadful pain split her tail and she found she had legs. The prince, walking along the shore, found her there and took her back to his palace.



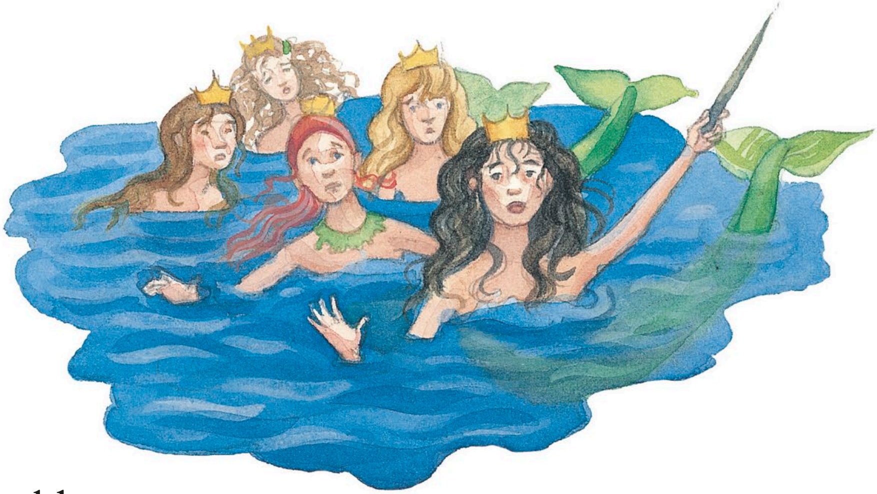
The little mermaid became the prince's constant companion. She rode with him by day and danced for him every evening, even though the pain in her legs was like dancing on swords. But he did not love her.



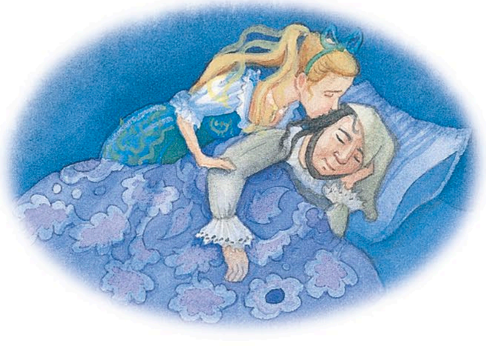
The prince had never forgotten the other princess, the one he believed had rescued him from drowning. And now he decided to marry her.

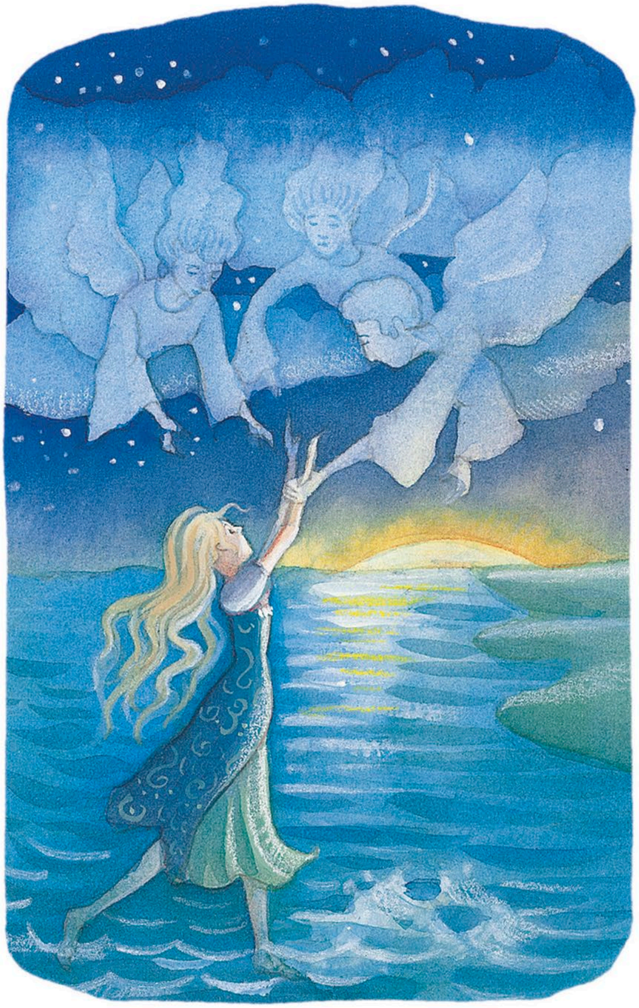
The little mermaid watched the whole ceremony with a broken heart. She knew that she would turn into foam as soon as he kissed his bride.

Her sisters swam to her and gave her a knife to kill the prince. "It's the only way to save your own life," they said.

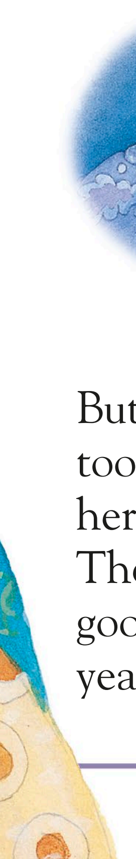


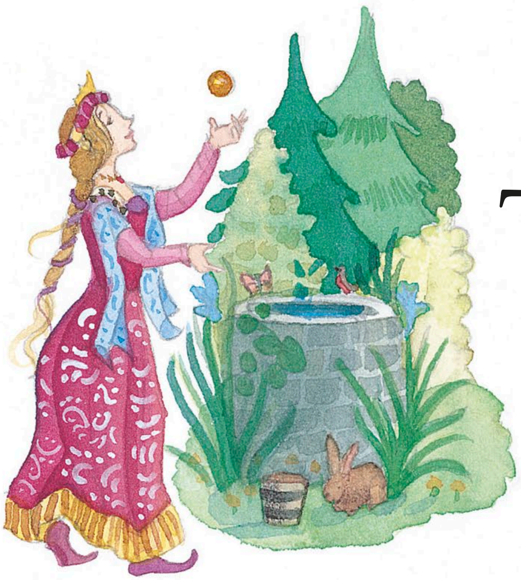
The little mermaid could not do it. She loved the prince too much. She kissed him goodbye and gave herself up to become foam.





But the spirits of the air took pity on her and whisked her up to live with them. They promised that if she did good deeds for three hundred years, she would live forever.

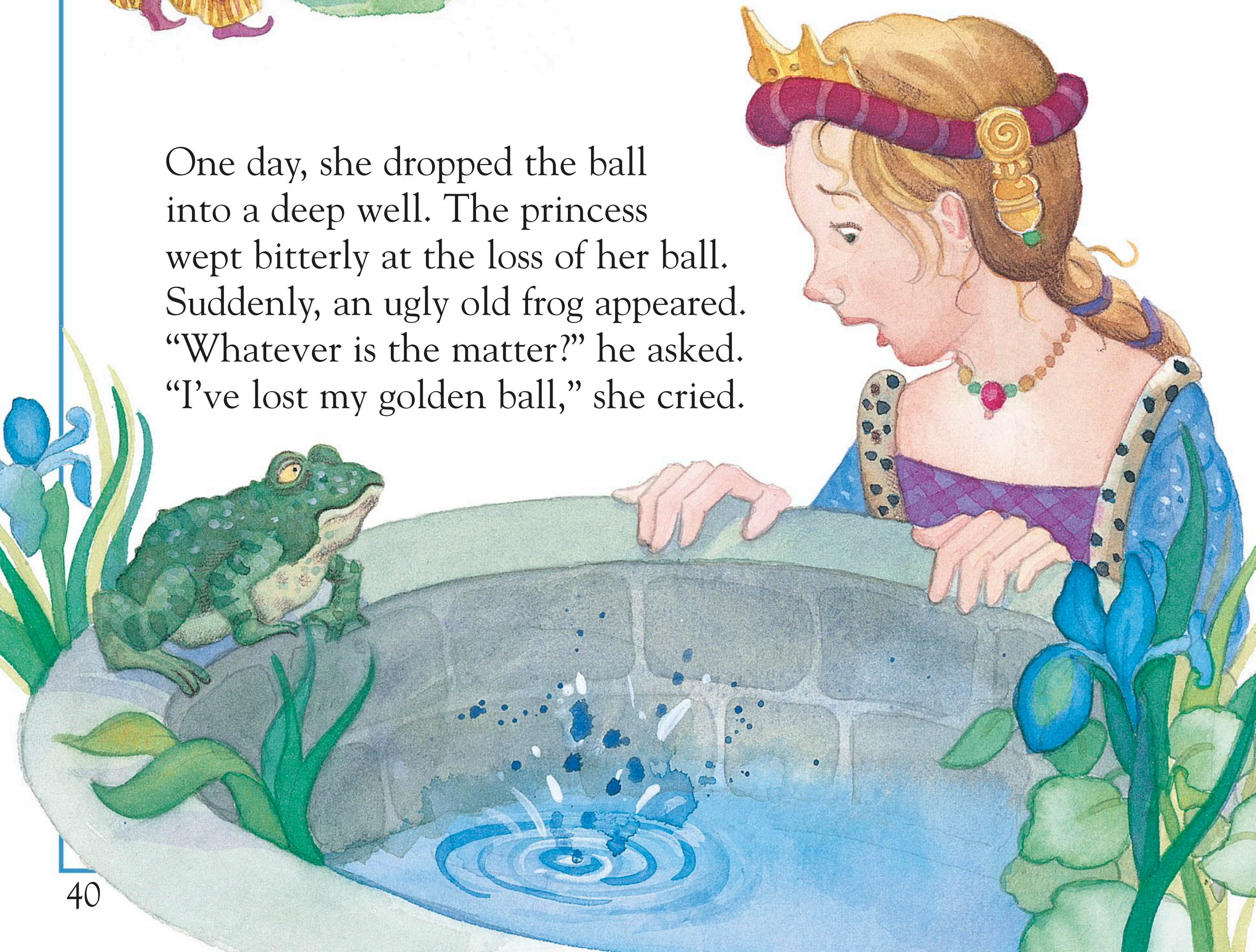


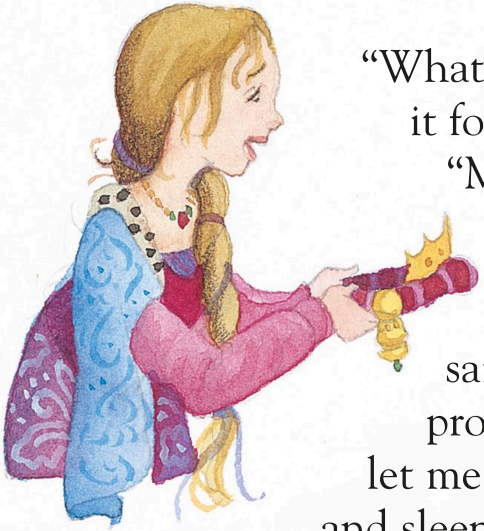


The Frog Prince

There was a pretty little princess who lived in a castle near a dark forest. On hot days she liked nothing better than to play with her golden ball under the shade of the trees.

One day, she dropped the ball into a deep well. The princess wept bitterly at the loss of her ball. Suddenly, an ugly old frog appeared. "Whatever is the matter?" he asked. "I've lost my golden ball," she cried.

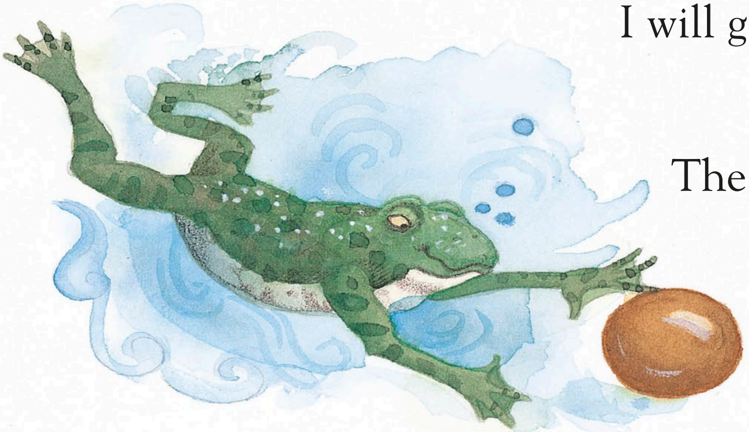




“What will you give me if I get it for you?” asked the frog.

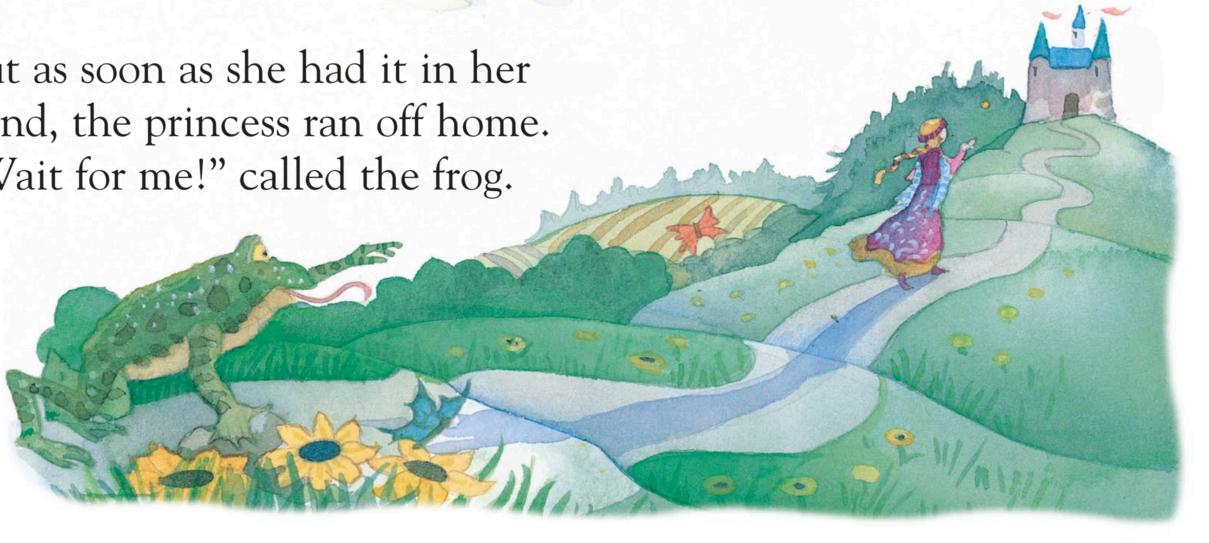
“My jewels and my crown,” said the princess.

“No good to me,” said the frog. “But if you promise to love me, and let me eat from your plate and sleep in your bed, then I will get it.”

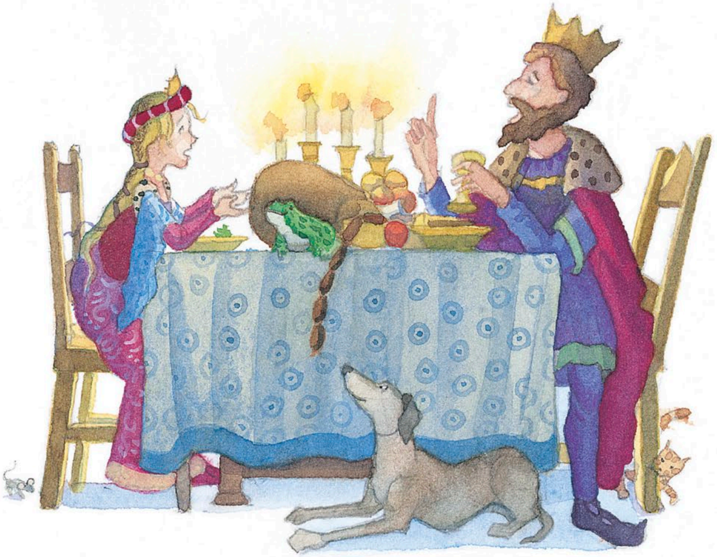


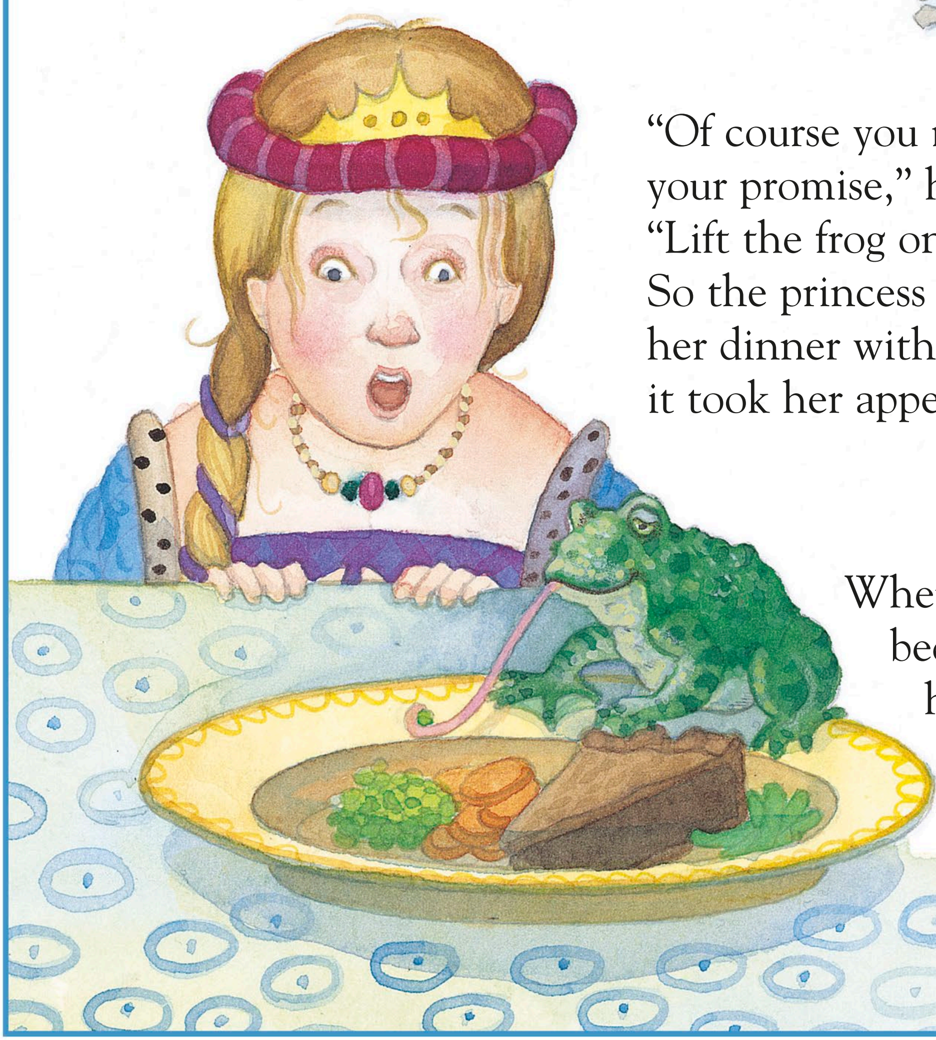
The princess promised without thinking. So the frog dove into the well and brought her back the golden ball.

But as soon as she had it in her hand, the princess ran off home. “Wait for me!” called the frog.



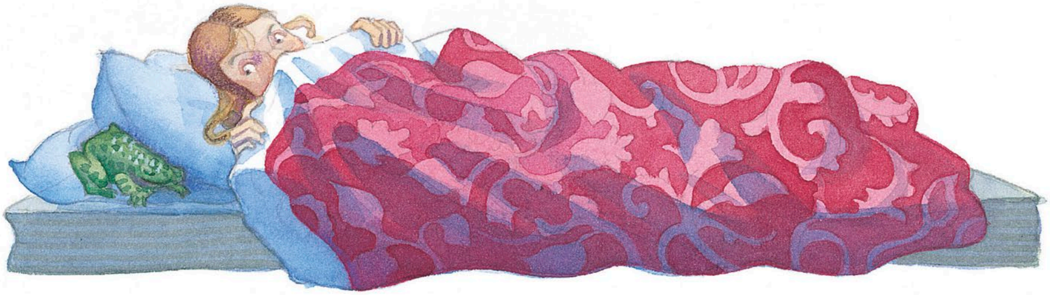
The princess forgot all about her promise. But the next day, when she was having dinner with her father, there was a knock at the door and in hopped the frog. The king made the princess tell him the whole story.



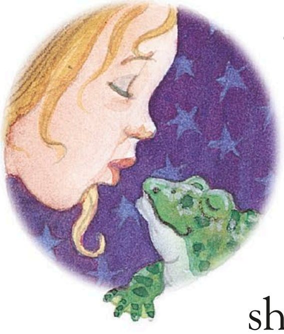


"Of course you must keep your promise," he said sternly. "Lift the frog onto the table." So the princess had to share her dinner with the frog, but it took her appetite away!

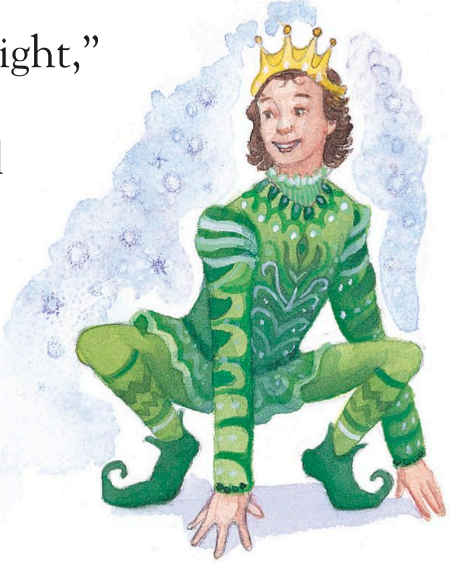
When it was time for bed, the king made his daughter carry the frog upstairs to her bedroom.



How the princess didn't want a cold, clammy frog in her bed! But she knew that her father would be angry if she didn't share her bed with the frog. So she let it hop onto her pillow.



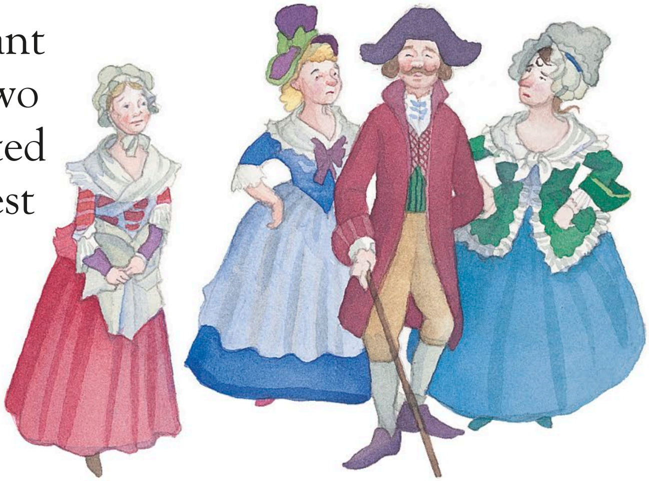
"Now you must kiss me good night," said the frog. The princess scrunched her face and closed her eyes. Then she gave him the smallest kiss. But when she opened her eyes, the frog had gone and in his place was a handsome prince. "You've broken the spell," he said.

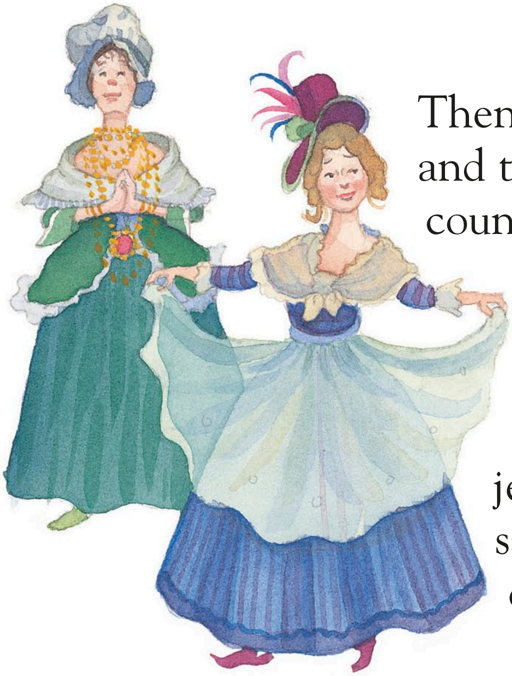


The prince was so grateful that he asked the princess to marry him. And since she liked him much better as a prince than as a frog, she said yes. He took her to his palace, where they lived happily ever after.

Beauty and the Beast

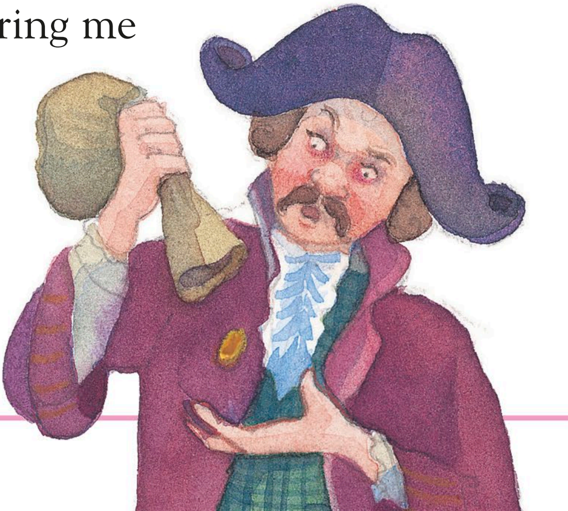
There was once a rich merchant with three daughters. The two older girls were spoiled and wanted the finest things. But the youngest daughter was sweet-natured and so lovely to look at that everyone called her Beauty.

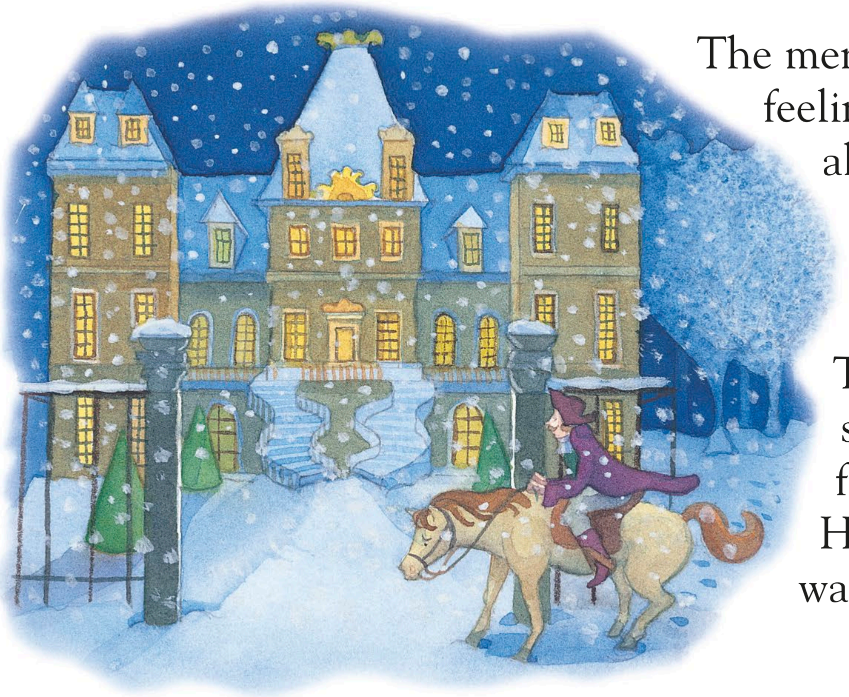




Then the merchant lost all his money, and the family had to move to the countryside. One day, he heard that his ship had come home laden with goods. "I'm off to town," he said, and asked his daughters what to bring back. The older girls asked for jewels and new dresses. But Beauty said, "Just bring me one rose."

After selling his cargo, the merchant paid off his debts. But to his horror he found he had no money left at all.

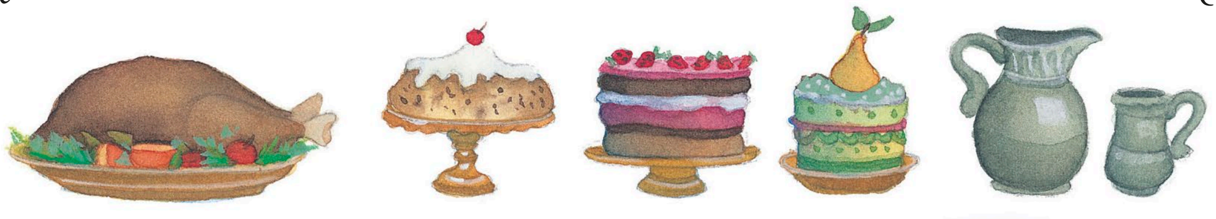




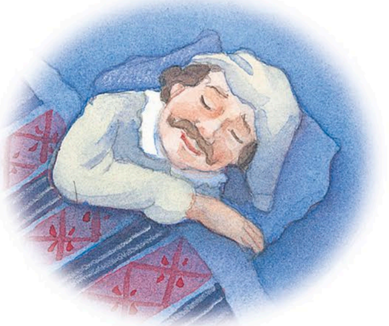
The merchant rode home, feeling very sad. But along the way it started to snow heavily and he got lost in the forest. Then, the merchant saw a light. It came from a big house. He went in, but there was nobody around.

The merchant found a dining room with a blazing fire and a table laid for one. Since he was so hungry he ate …

a whole chicken, three delicious desserts, and drank a jugful of wine.

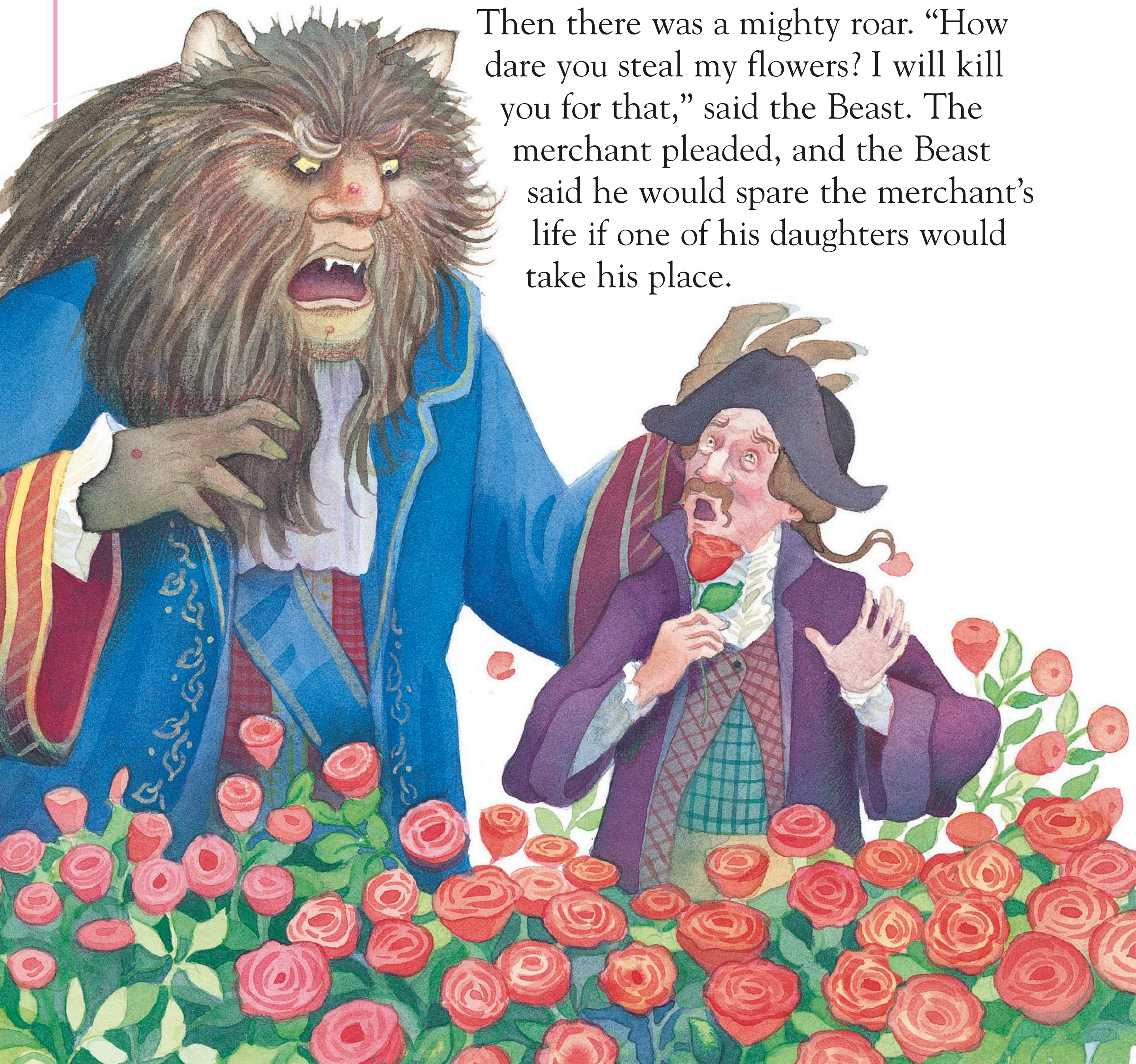


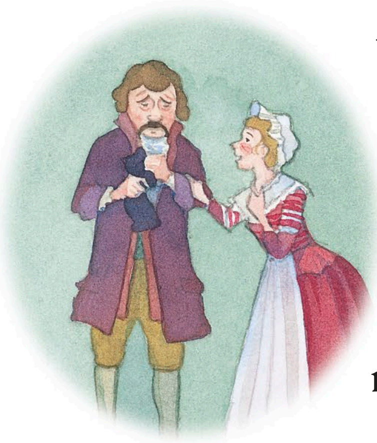
After dinner, he explored the empty house and found a room with a comfortable bed already made up. He was so tired that he crawled into it and fell fast asleep.



The next morning, the merchant found new clothes laid out for him. He got dressed and went for a walk in the garden. He saw a rosebush and remembered Beauty. "Just one rose," he thought, plucking it from the bush.

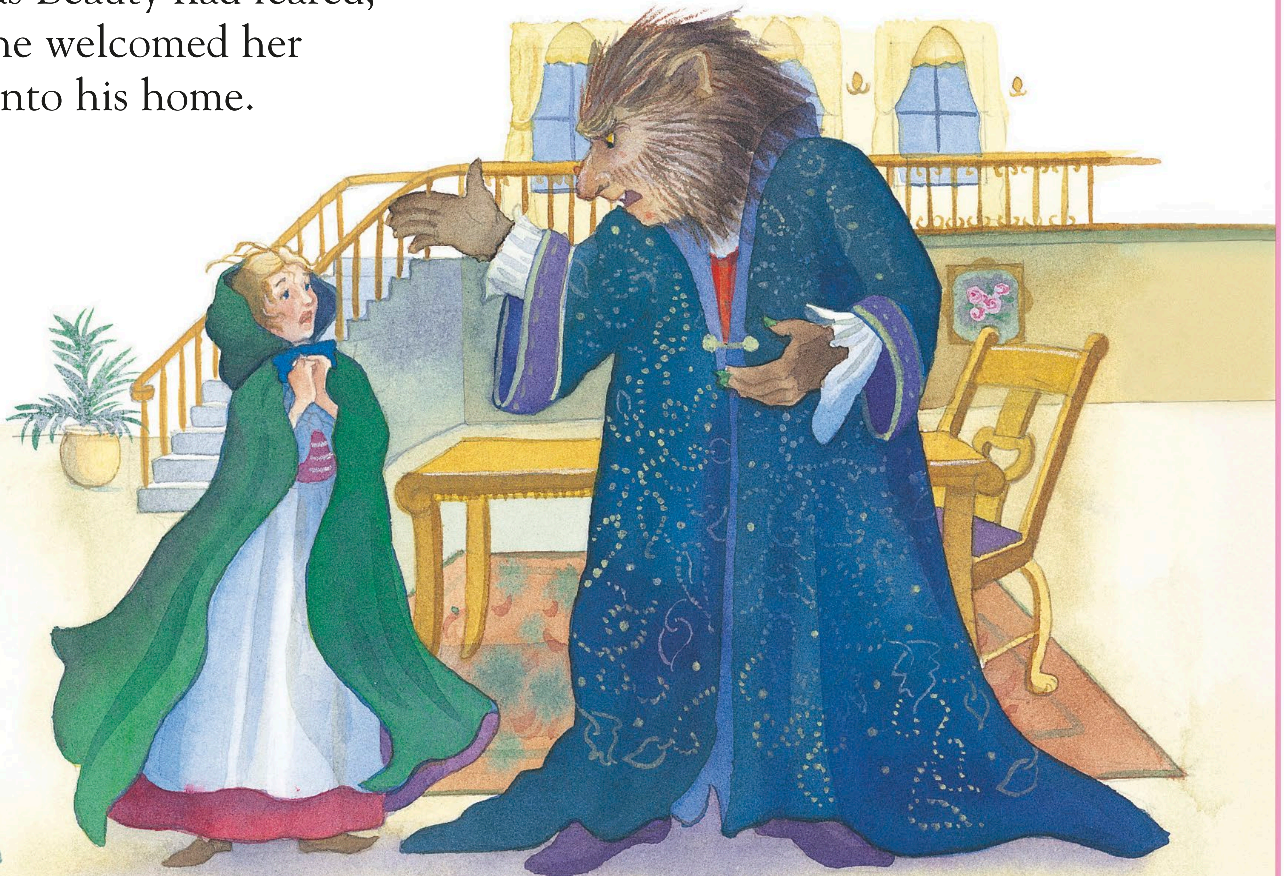
Then there was a mighty roar. "How dare you steal my flowers? I will kill you for that," said the Beast. The merchant pleaded, and the Beast said he would spare the merchant's life if one of his daughters would take his place.

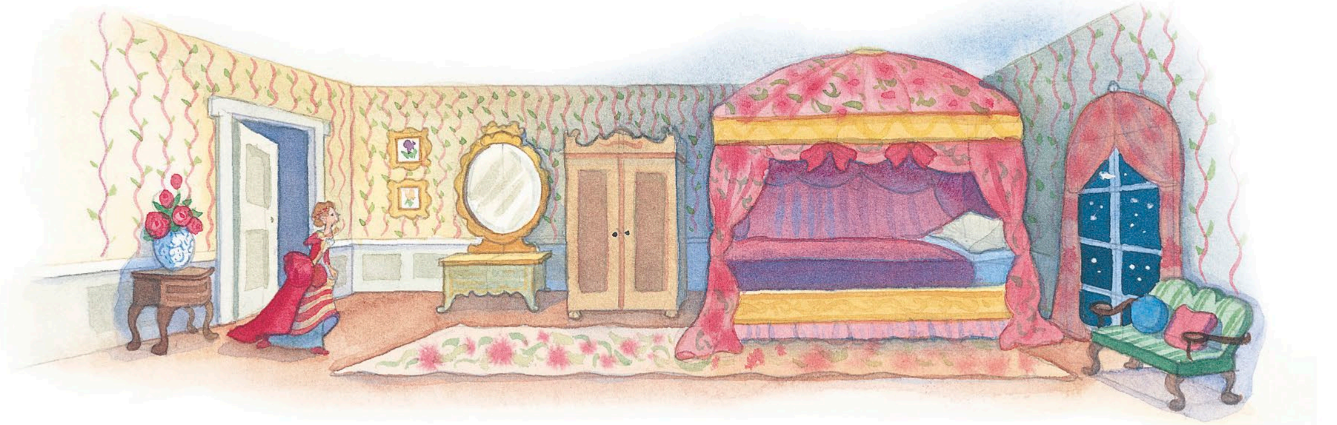




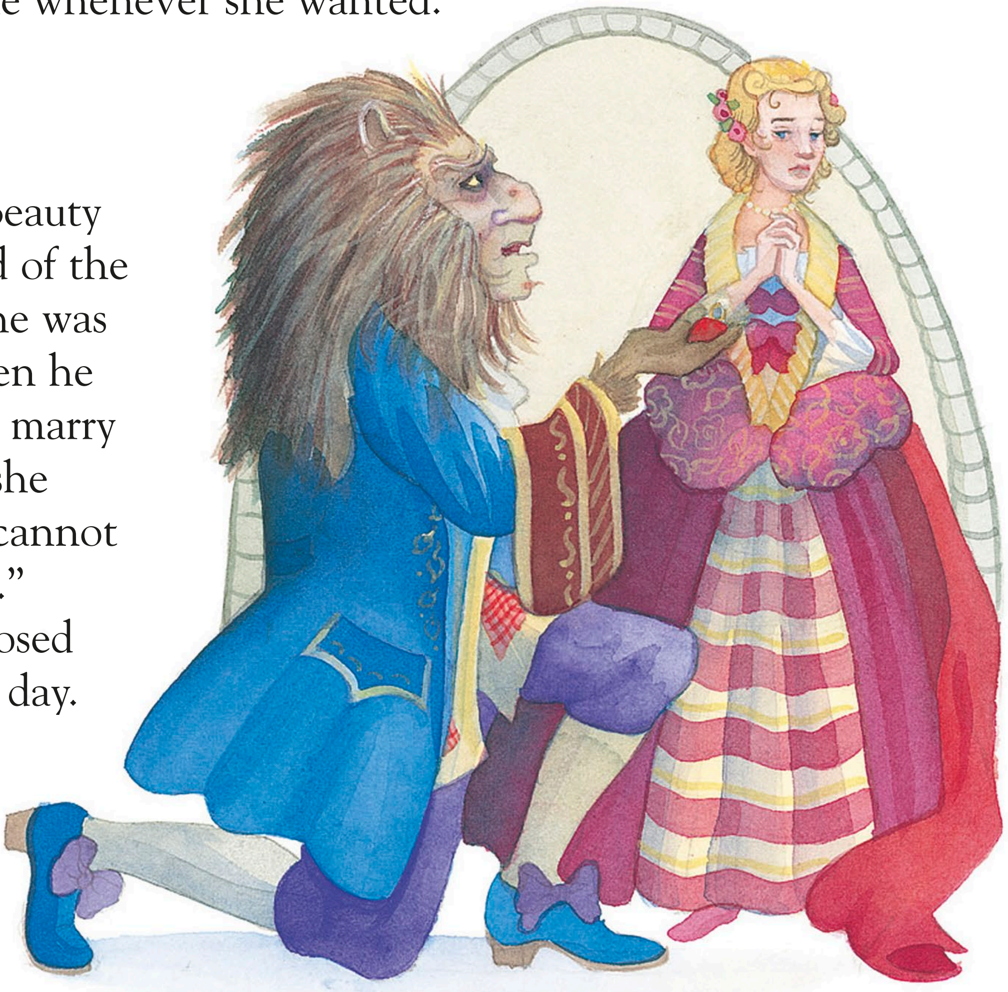
When the merchant got home and told his daughters what had happened, Beauty said right away, "The rose was for me, father, so I will take your place. Let the Beast eat me." Beauty's father wept. Even her sisters managed to shed some crocodile tears!

Beauty trembled as she entered the Beast's house. There stood the Beast, but instead of eating her as Beauty had feared, he welcomed her into his home.



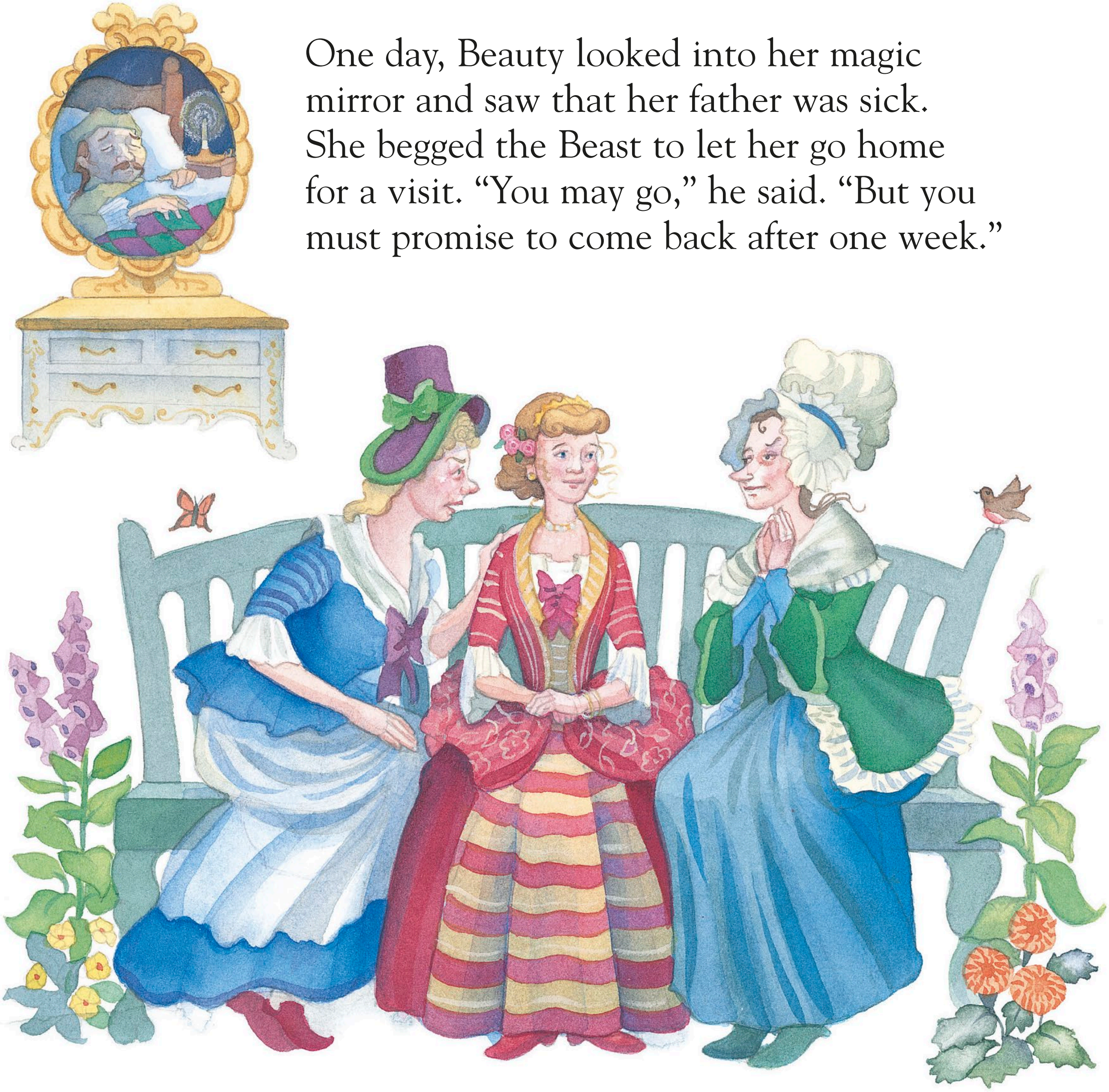


The Beast gave Beauty a wonderful bedroom, with a magic mirror in which she could see her old home whenever she wanted.

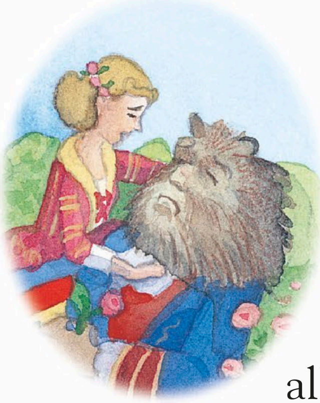


Gradually, Beauty became fond of the Beast, but she was shocked when he asked her to marry him. "No," she thought. "I cannot love a Beast." But he proposed to her every day.

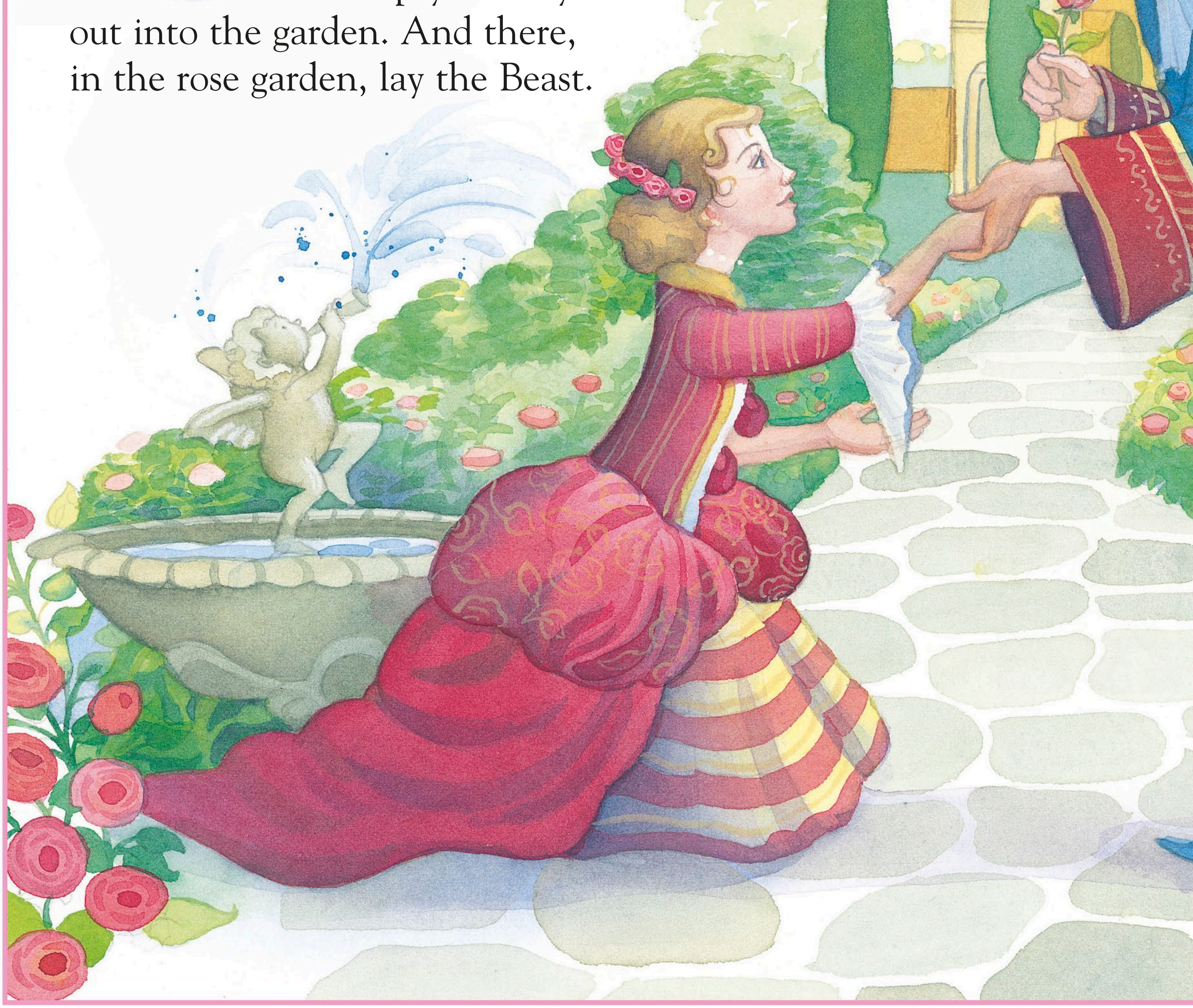
One day, Beauty looked into her magic mirror and saw that her father was sick. She begged the Beast to let her go home for a visit. "You may go," he said. "But you must promise to come back after one week."

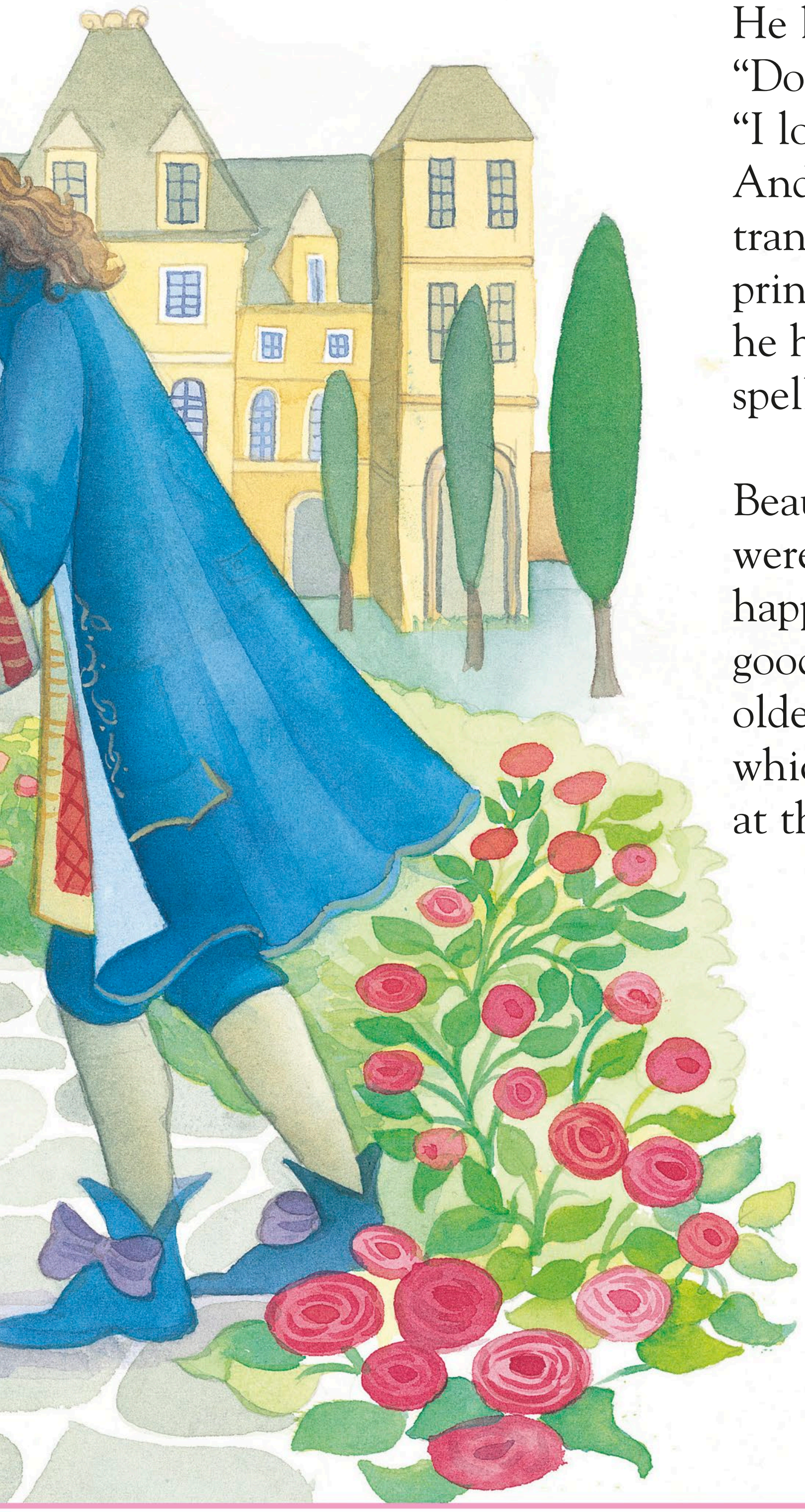


Beauty found herself back at home by magic. Her sisters were jealous of the beautiful clothes and jewels the Beast had given her. "Let's keep her here longer than a week," they said. "Then the Beast will be angry and gobble her up."



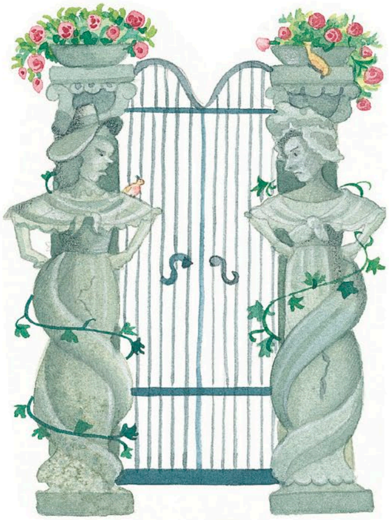
But Beauty began to miss the Beast. One night, Beauty had a dream that the Beast was dying. So she wished herself back at his house. She went through the rooms looking for him, but they were all empty. Beauty ran out into the garden. And there, in the rose garden, lay the Beast.



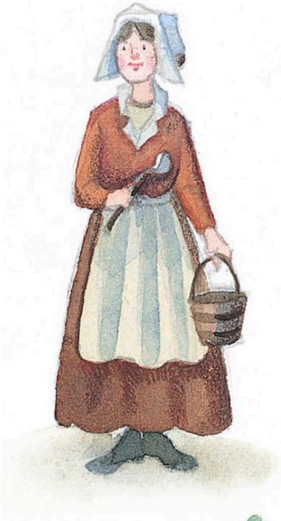


He looked as if he was dying. "Don't die, Beast," she cried. "I love you. I will marry you!" And suddenly, the Beast was transformed into a handsome prince. He told Beauty that he had been put under a spell by a wicked fairy.

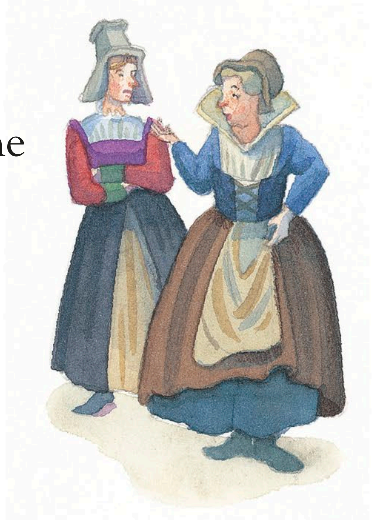
Beauty and the prince were married and lived happily ever after. And a good fairy turned the two older sisters into statues, which had to stand forever at their sister's gate!

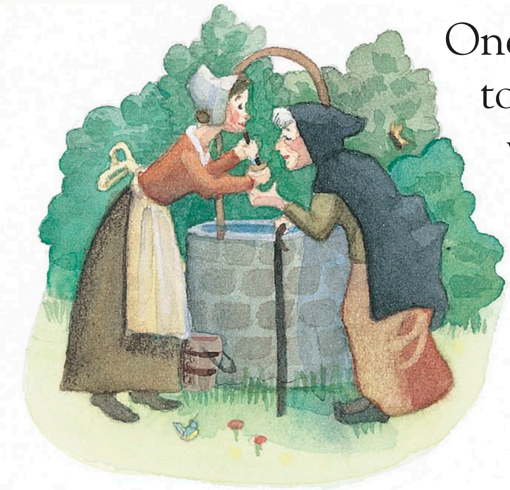


Diamonds and Toads



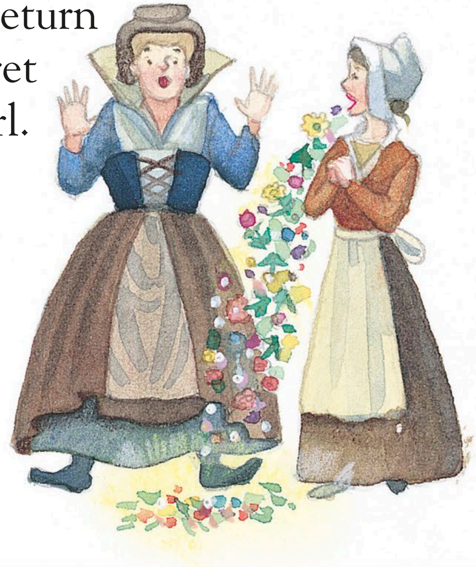
There was once a widow with two daughters. The younger one was a good-natured girl who always had a smile on her face. The older girl was bad-tempered and greedy like her mother, and they were always mean to the younger girl.



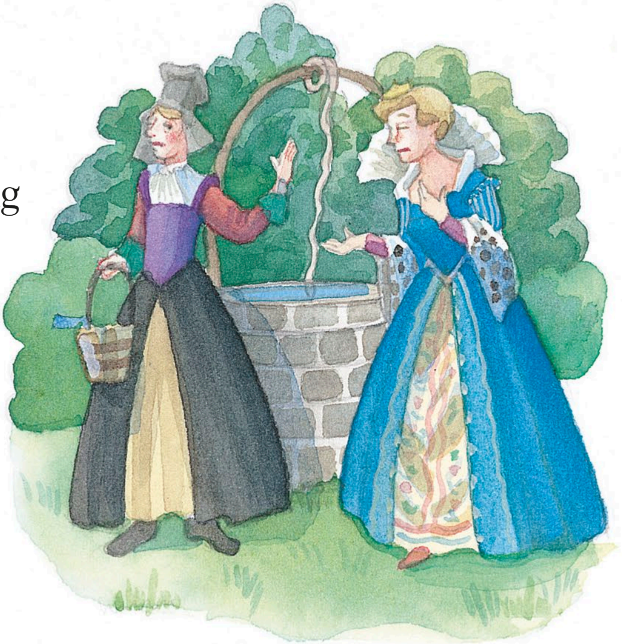


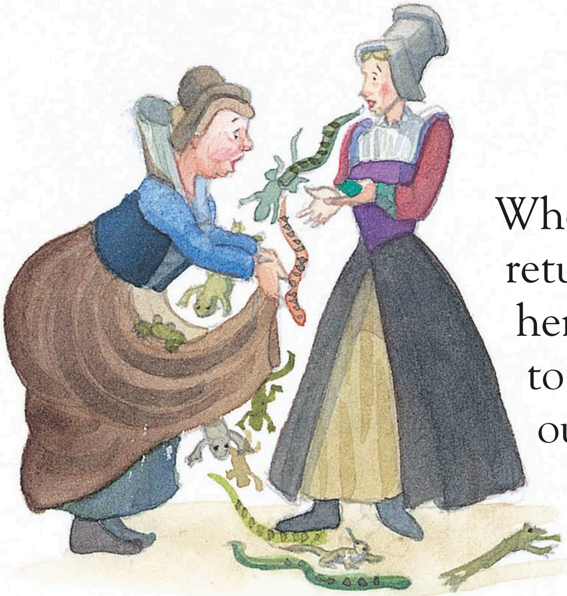
One day, they sent her to the well to get water. There she met an old woman who asked her for a drink. "Of course," said the girl. Then the woman revealed herself to be a fairy, and in return bestowed a secret gift upon the girl.

When the girl got back home, she was scolded for being late. And when she opened her mouth to explain, out fell flowers and diamonds and all sorts of precious jewels, for this was her gift.

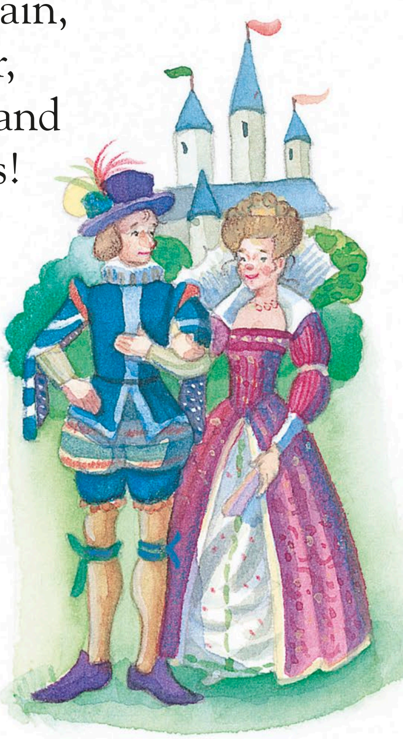


"Quick, go to the well, too!" said the mother to her older daughter. The daughter went and met a young woman who asked her for some water. But the greedy girl refused. Then the fairy—for that was who she was—rewarded her with an unusual gift!



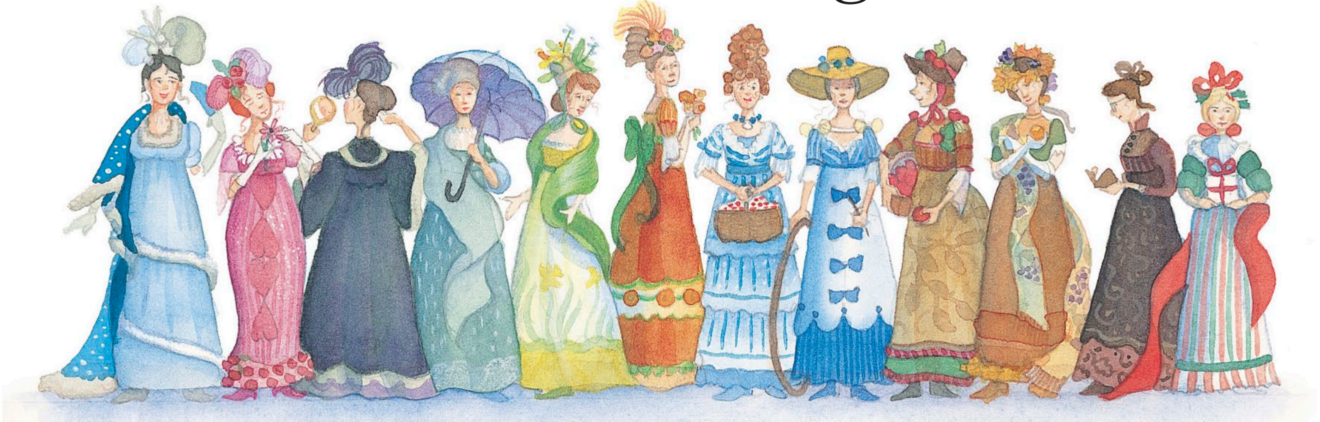


When the grumpy daughter returned home and opened her mouth to complain, to everyone's horror, out dropped toads and lizards and snakes!



The younger sister was thrown out of the house. But she was rescued by a prince, and when he saw how beautiful she was and what valuable things fell out of her mouth, he asked her to marry him. But no one wanted to be near the older sister. She lived alone for the rest of her life.

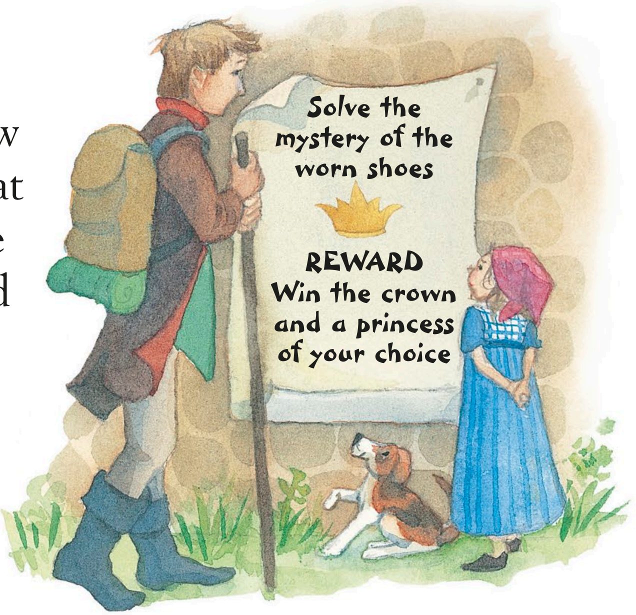
The Twelve Dancing Princesses

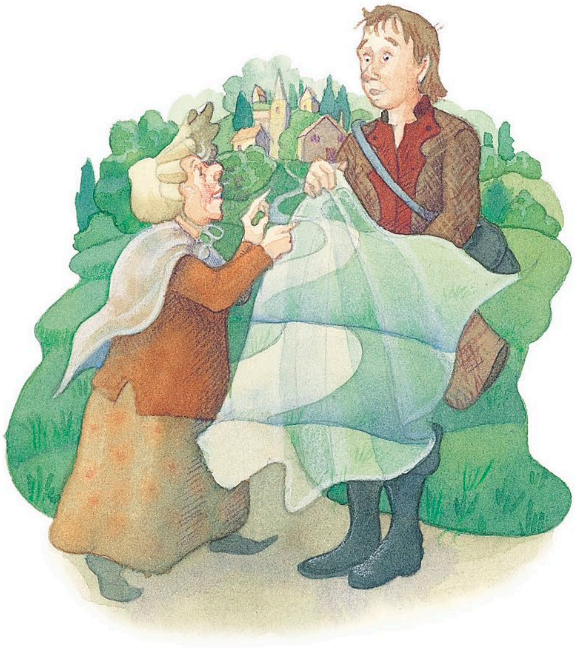


There was once a king who had twelve beautiful daughters. He was very fond of them and didn't want them to leave home. So every night he locked them in the bedroom they shared. But every morning he found their satin shoes worn out.

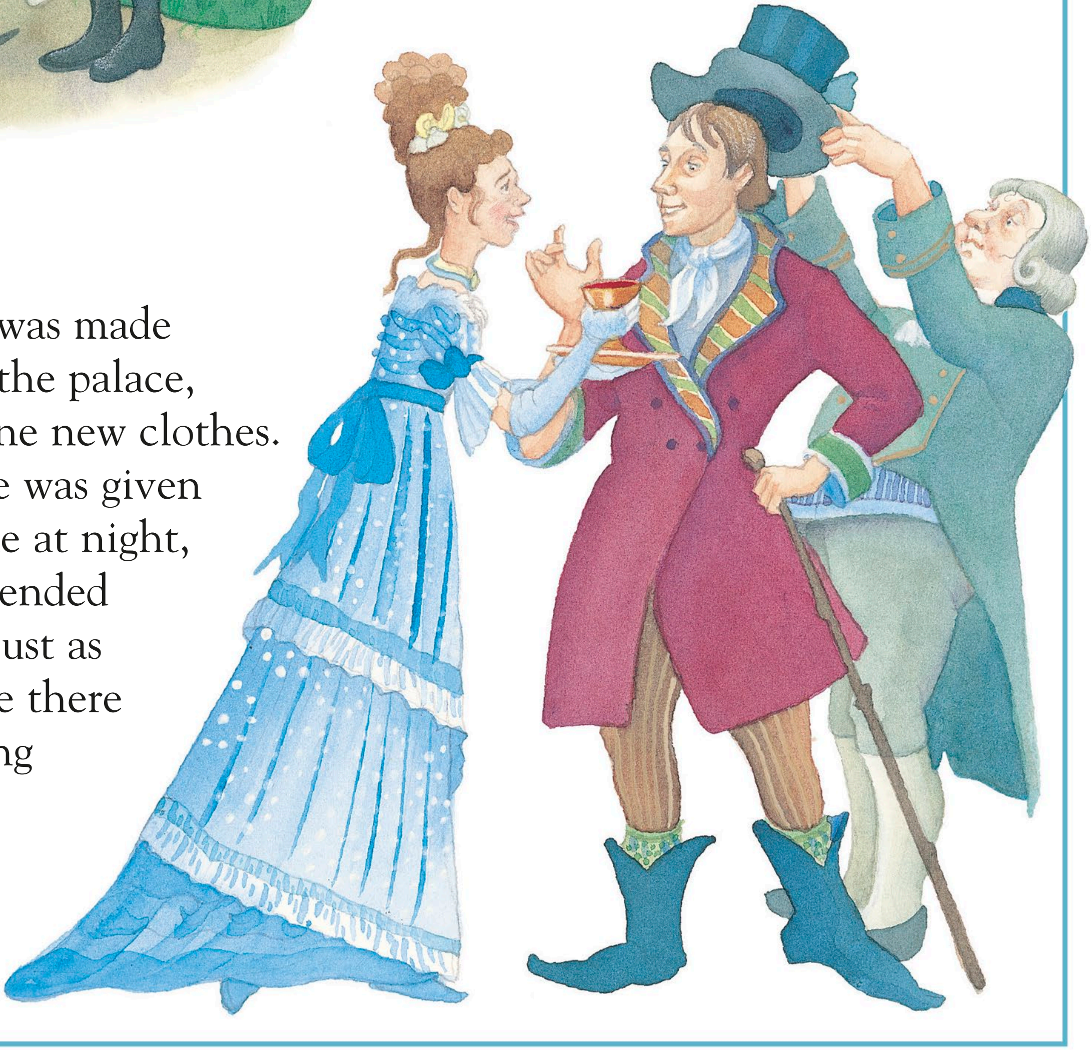
The king couldn't understand how this was happening, so he said that anyone who could discover where the princesses went dancing could marry one of them and become king. But no one could.

One day, a soldier came to town and read about the reward.


Solve the mystery of the worn shoes
REWARD
Win the crown and a princess of your choice

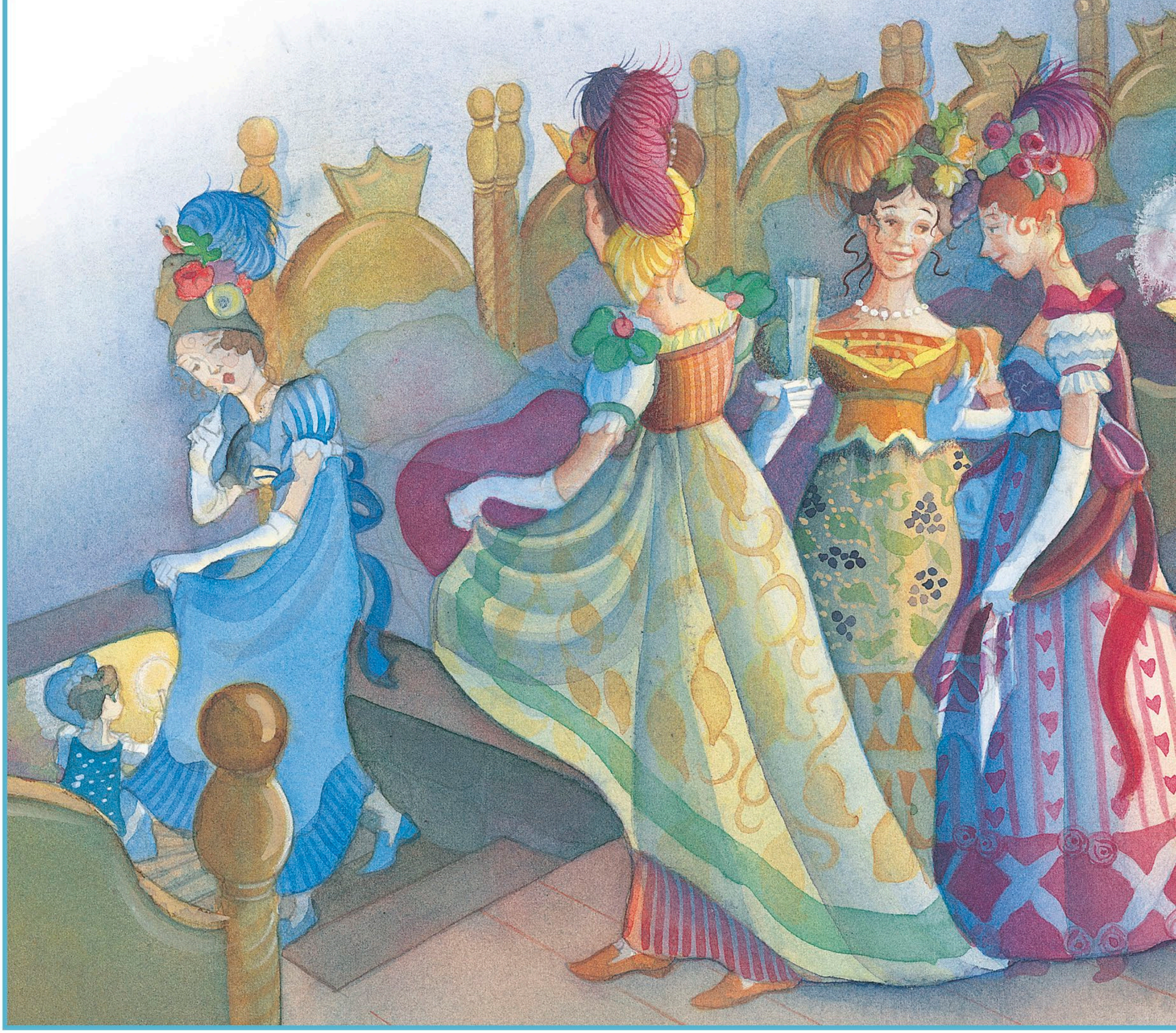


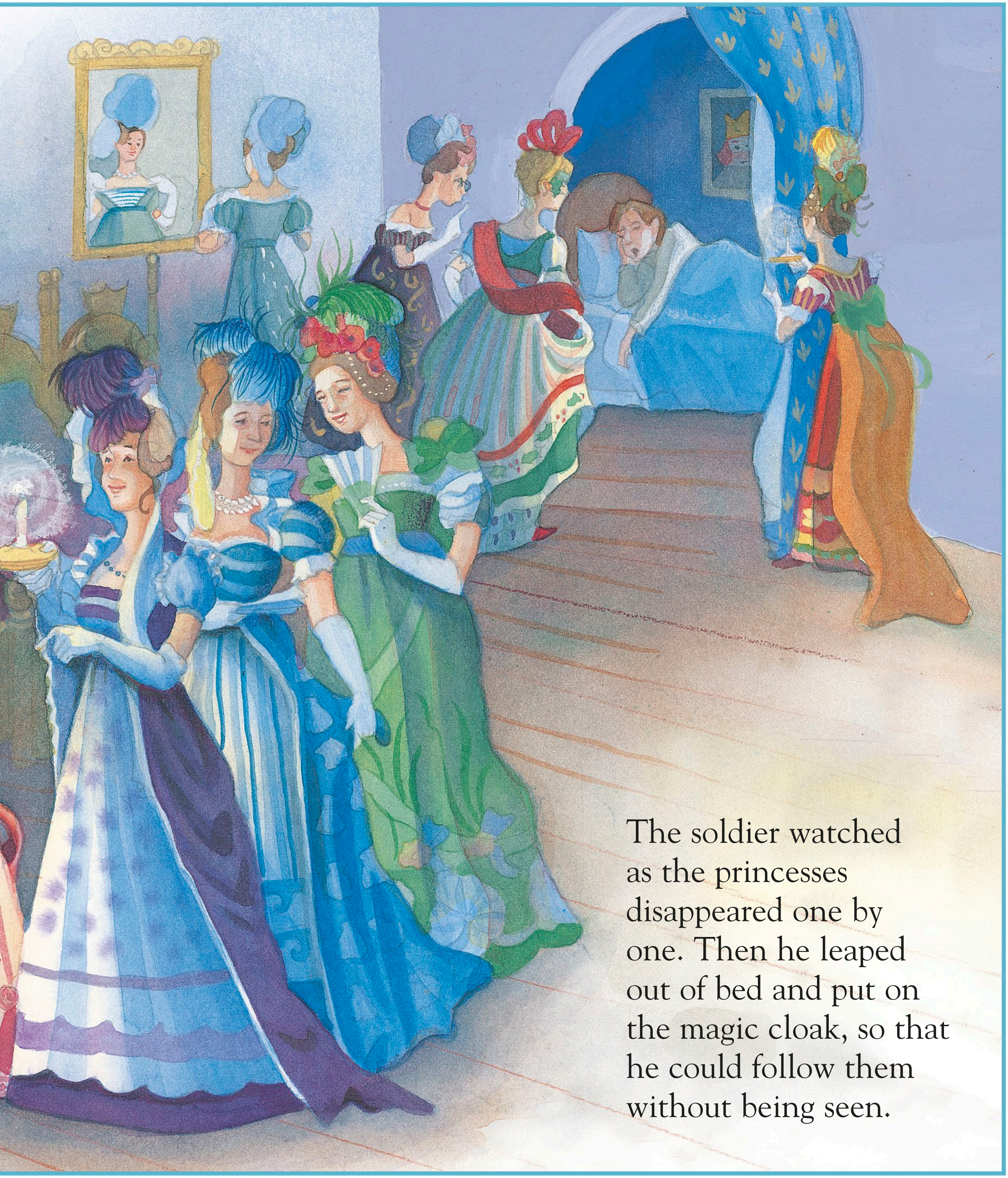
On his way to the palace, the soldier met an old woman. She told him not to drink the wine that the princesses would give him at bedtime. She also gave him a magic cloak to make him invisible, so that he could follow the princesses.



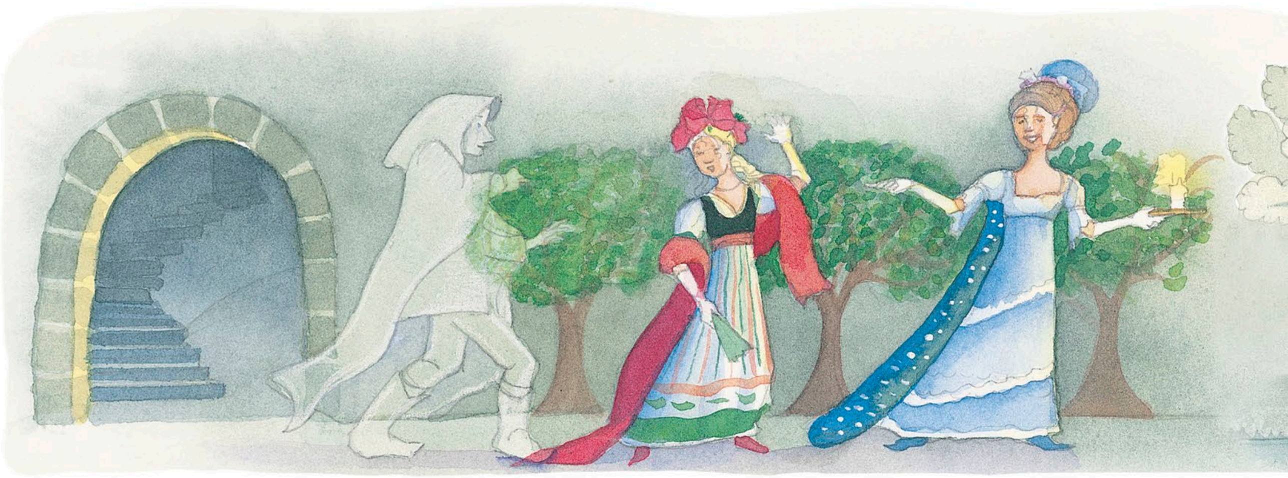
The soldier was made welcome at the palace, and given fine new clothes. But when he was given a cup of wine at night, he only pretended to drink it. Just as well, because there was a sleeping potion in it!

The soldier pretended to be fast asleep, but all the time, he was watching from the room next door. He saw the oldest princess tap her bed and a secret passageway appeared. There was a staircase under the bedroom floor!

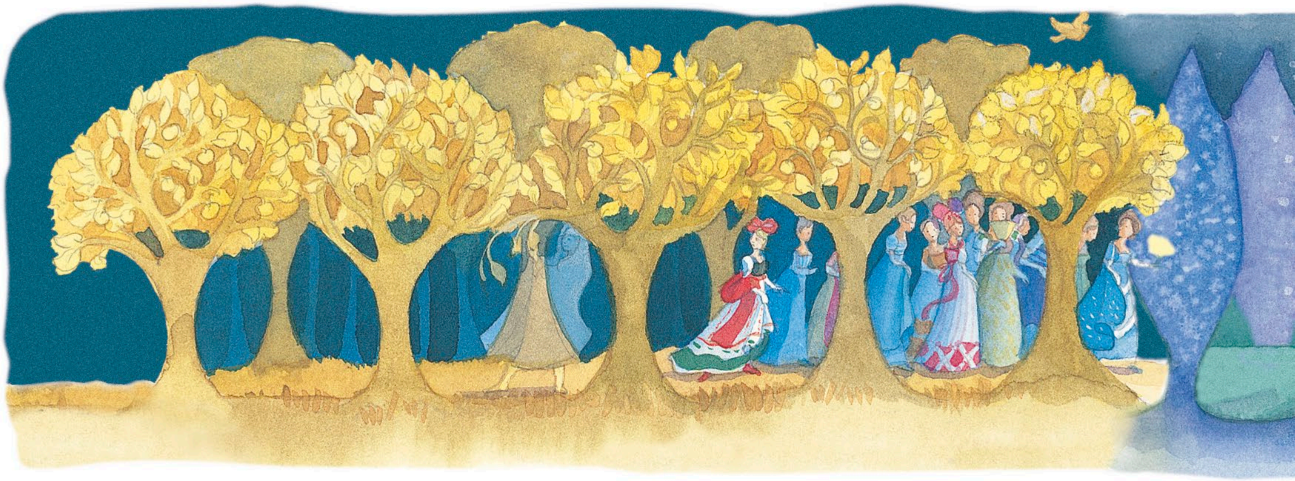




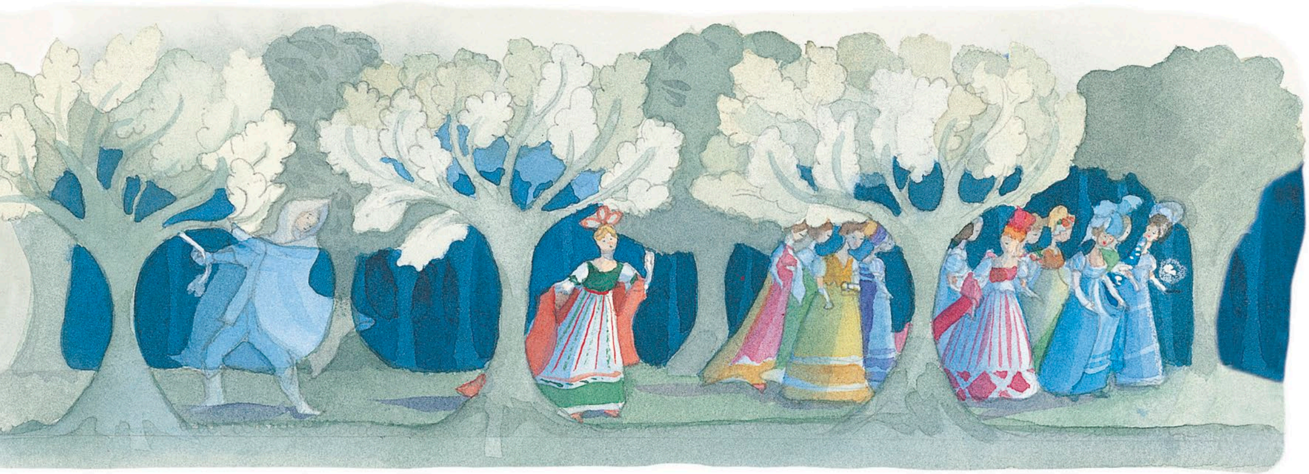
The soldier watched as the princesses disappeared one by one. Then he leaped out of bed and put on the magic cloak, so that he could follow them without being seen.



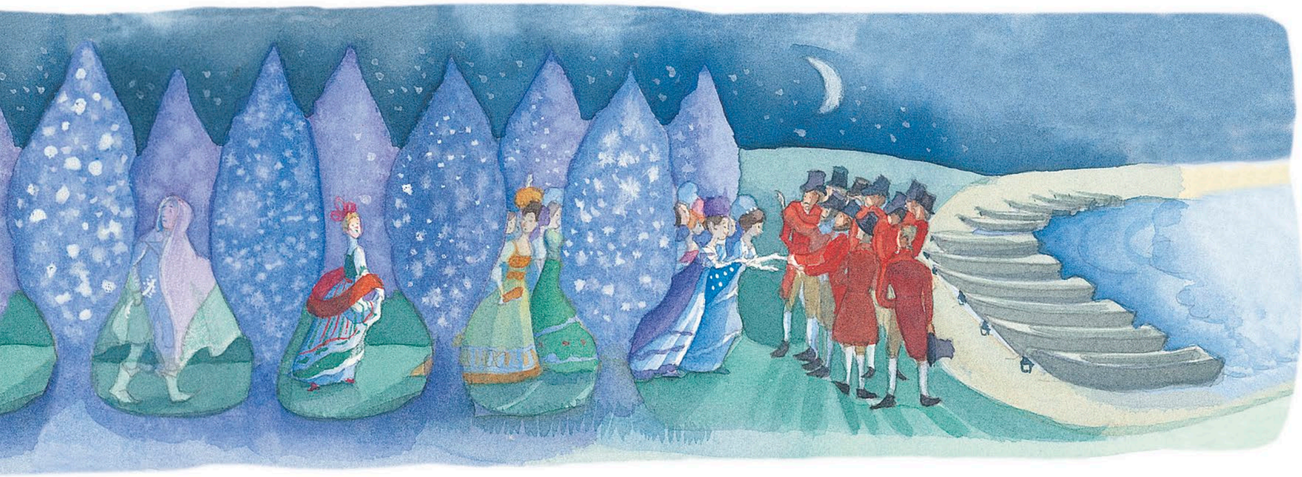
In his haste, the soldier stepped on the dress of the youngest princess, who was the last to descend the secret staircase. “Someone’s tugging at my dress,” she complained. “Nonsense,” said her sisters. “There’s nobody there.”



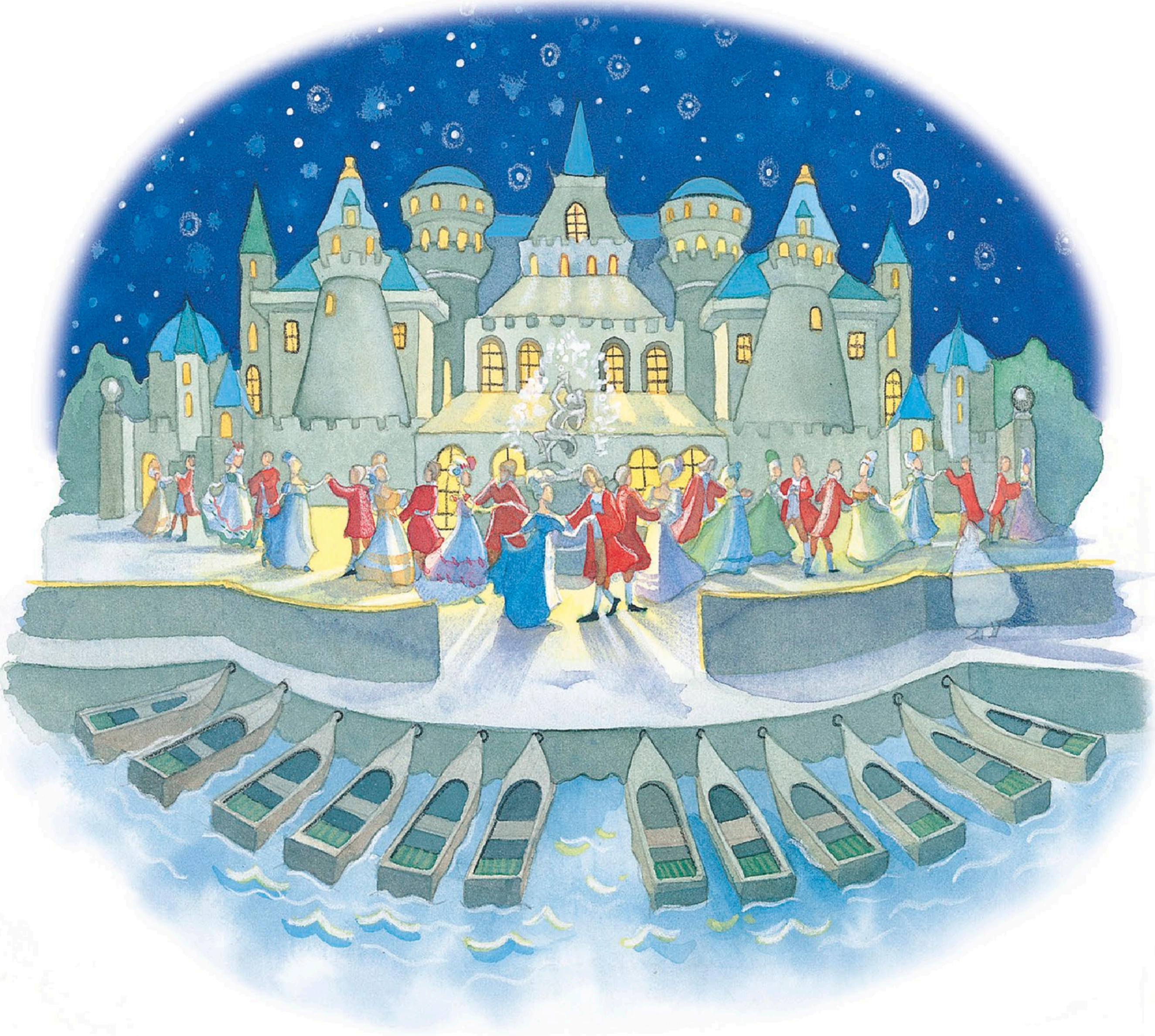
Next, they passed woods where all the trees were made of shimmering gold. The soldier snapped off another twig, startling the youngest princess again. “Surely you heard that noise?” she asked her sisters.



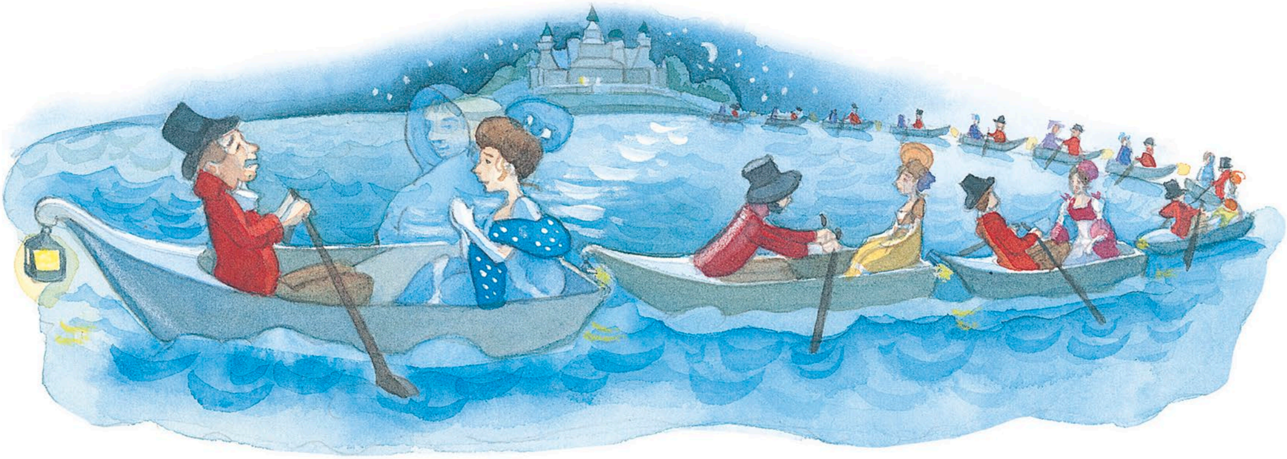
When they got out into the open air, the princesses walked through woods in which all the trees had silver leaves. The invisible soldier snapped off a twig to take back with him—the noise made the youngest princess jump.



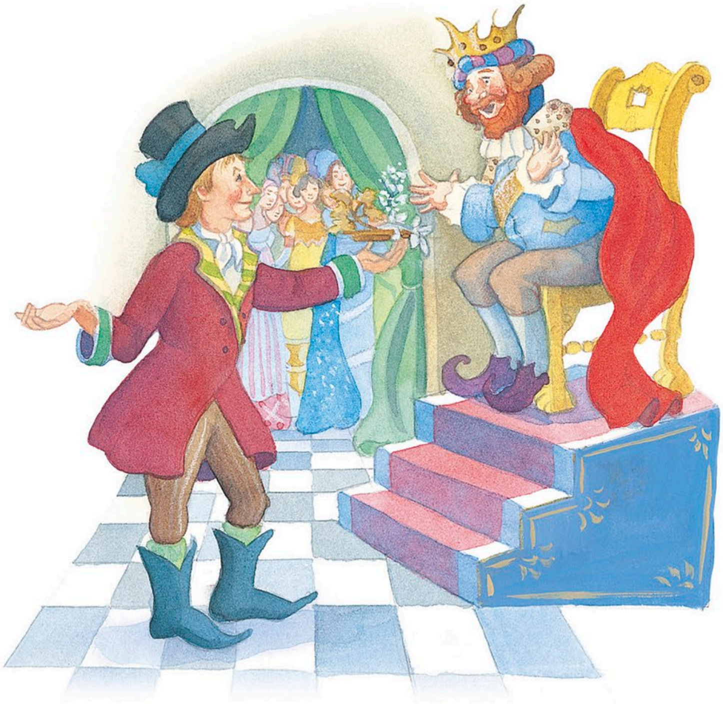
Finally, they traveled through woods where the trees were covered with sparkling diamonds. The soldier broke off a diamond twig. But when the youngest princess cried, “What was that loud snap?” her sisters said, “It was a gun fired to welcome us.”



On the other side of the diamond woods was a blue lake; twelve handsome princes stood ready, each waiting to row a princess across the lake to a castle. So the soldier quickly got into the boat carrying the youngest sister. When the sisters reached the beautiful castle, they danced the night away with their partners.



At the end of the night, the princes rowed the princesses back across the lake, and this time the soldier sat in the oldest sister's boat. The tired princesses went straight to bed, taking off their tattered shoes! The same thing happened on the next two nights.

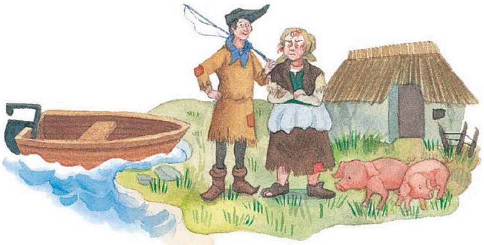


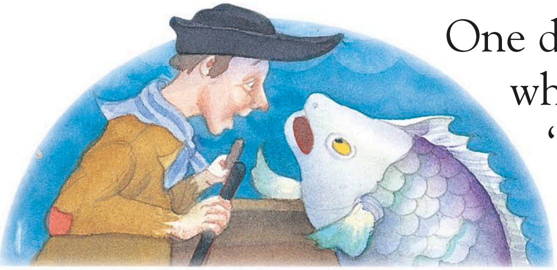
Then the soldier showed the king the silver, gold, and diamond twigs, and took him to see the secret staircase. The twelve sisters looked on in disbelief.

"Congratulations," said the delighted king. And just as the reward said, the soldier was allowed to choose a princess and inherit the kingdom.

The Fisherman and his Wife

There was once a poor fisherman, who lived with his wife in a hut by the sea. Every day he went to fish in the sea with his rod and line.

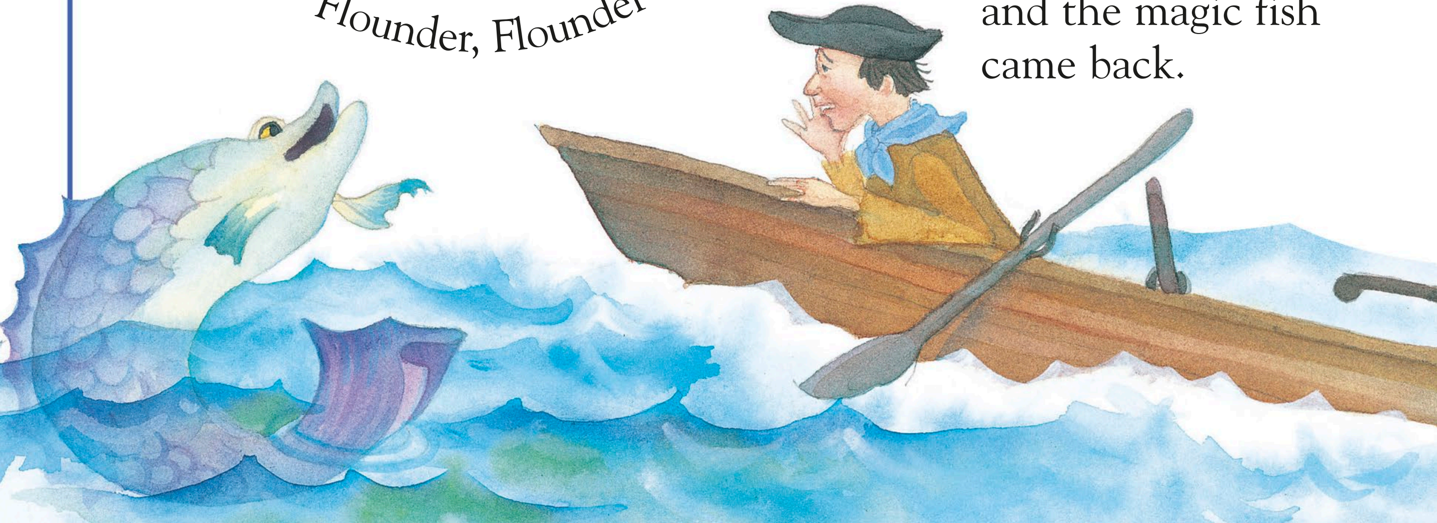


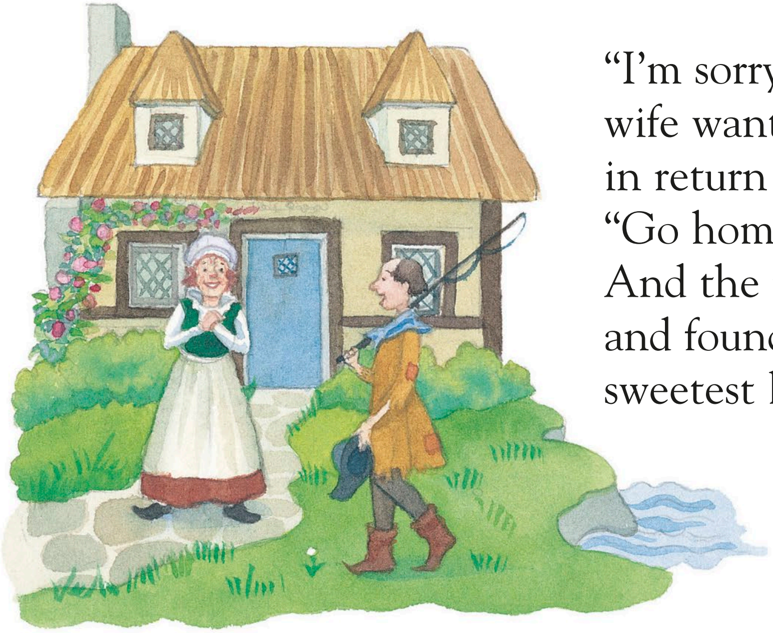


One day, he caught a huge flounder, who begged not to be killed. "I am an enchanted prince," it said. "I wouldn't taste nice at all. Put me back in the water."

When the fisherman came back home empty-handed, his wife scolded him, "Haven't you caught anything today?" "Nothing but an enchanted prince," replied the fisherman. "And didn't you ask for a reward? Go back, you fool, and ask for a house!"

"Flounder, Flounder come to me," called the fisherman, and the magic fish came back.

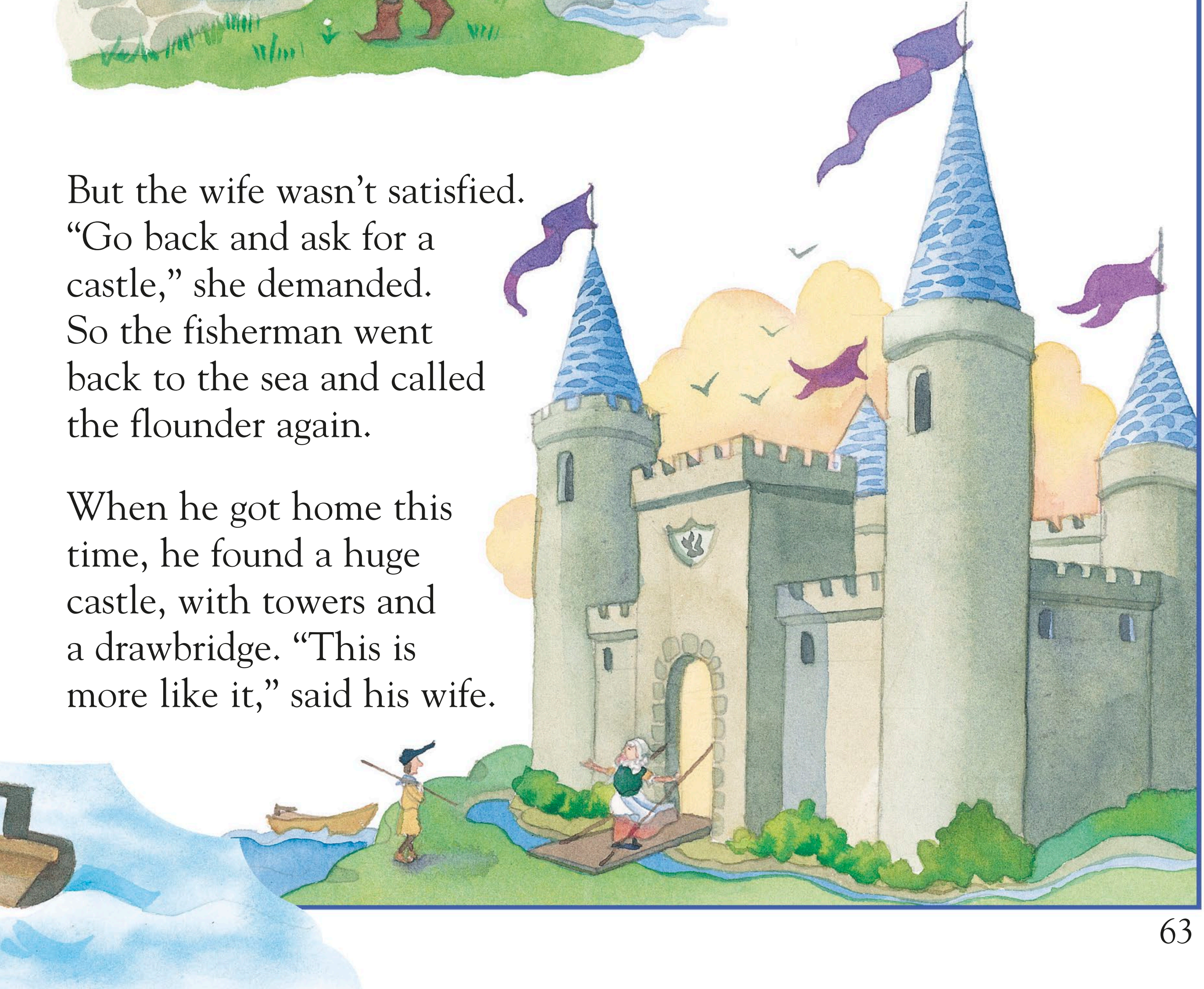


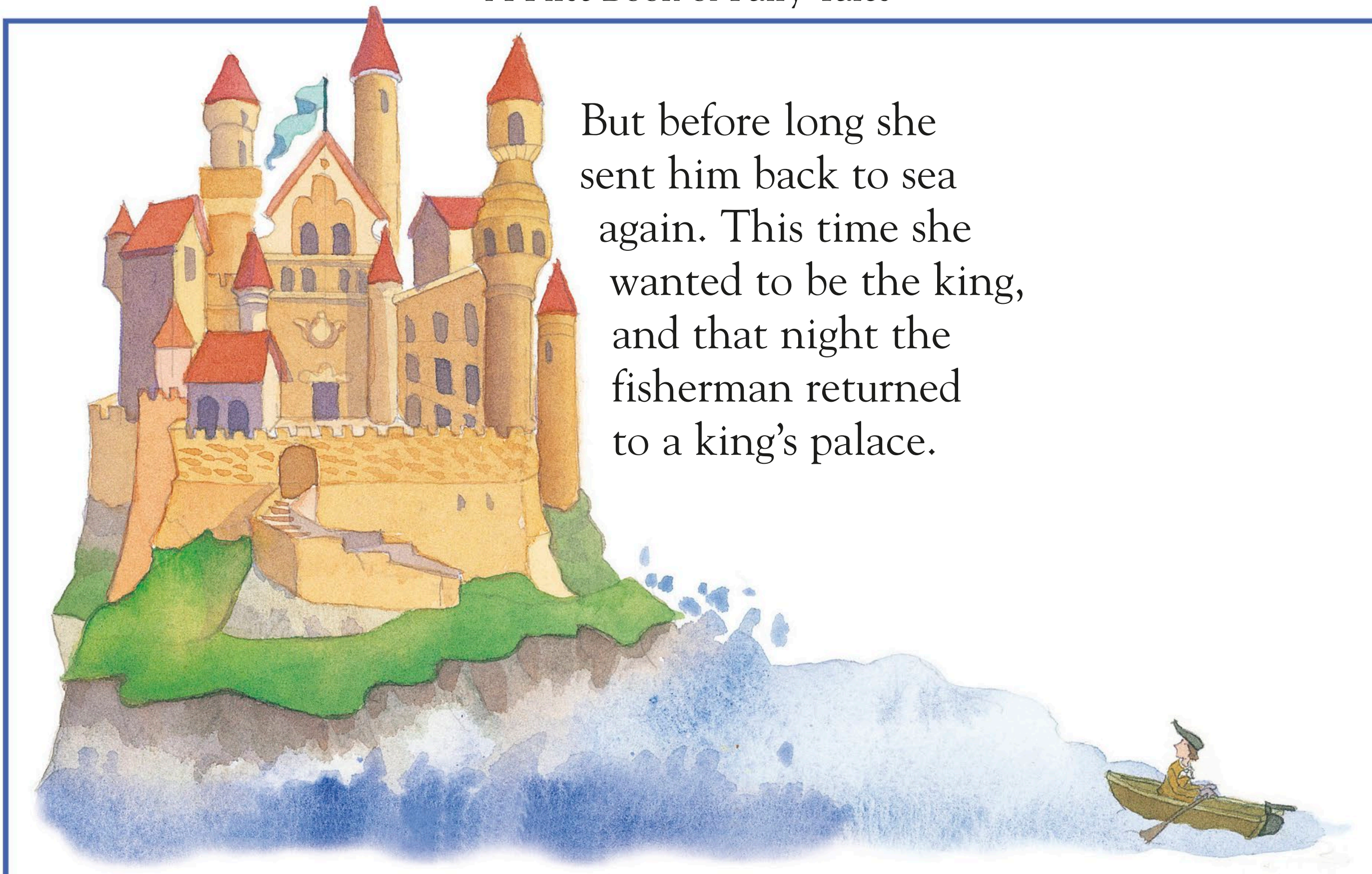


"I'm sorry, but my wife wants a new house in return for saving you." "Go home," said the flounder. And the fisherman went home and found his wife in the sweetest little cottage.

But the wife wasn't satisfied. "Go back and ask for a castle," she demanded. So the fisherman went back to the sea and called the flounder again.

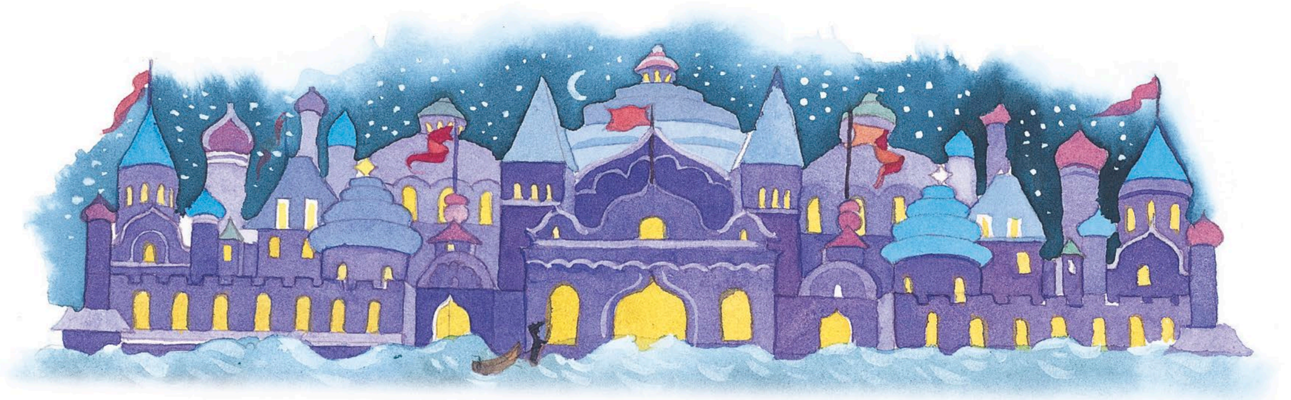
When he got home this time, he found a huge castle, with towers and a drawbridge. "This is more like it," said his wife.

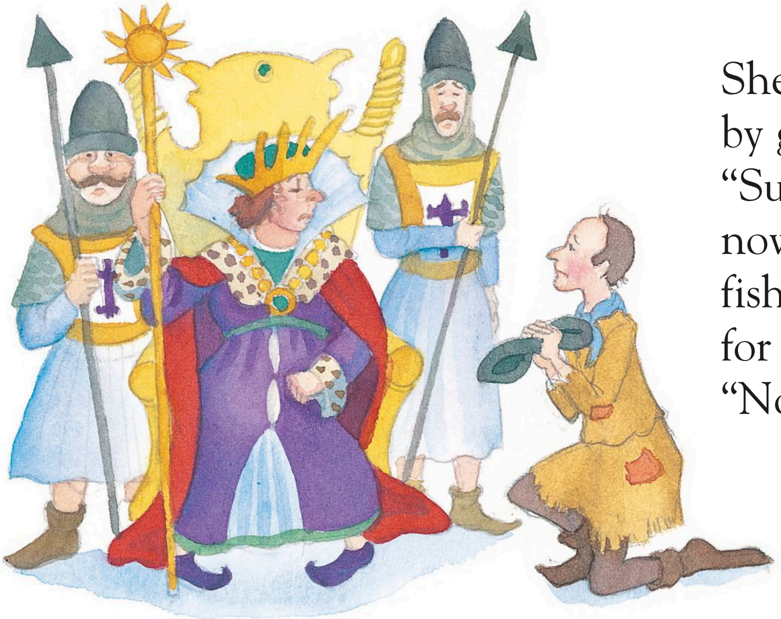




But before long she sent him back to sea again. This time she wanted to be the king, and that night the fisherman returned to a king's palace.

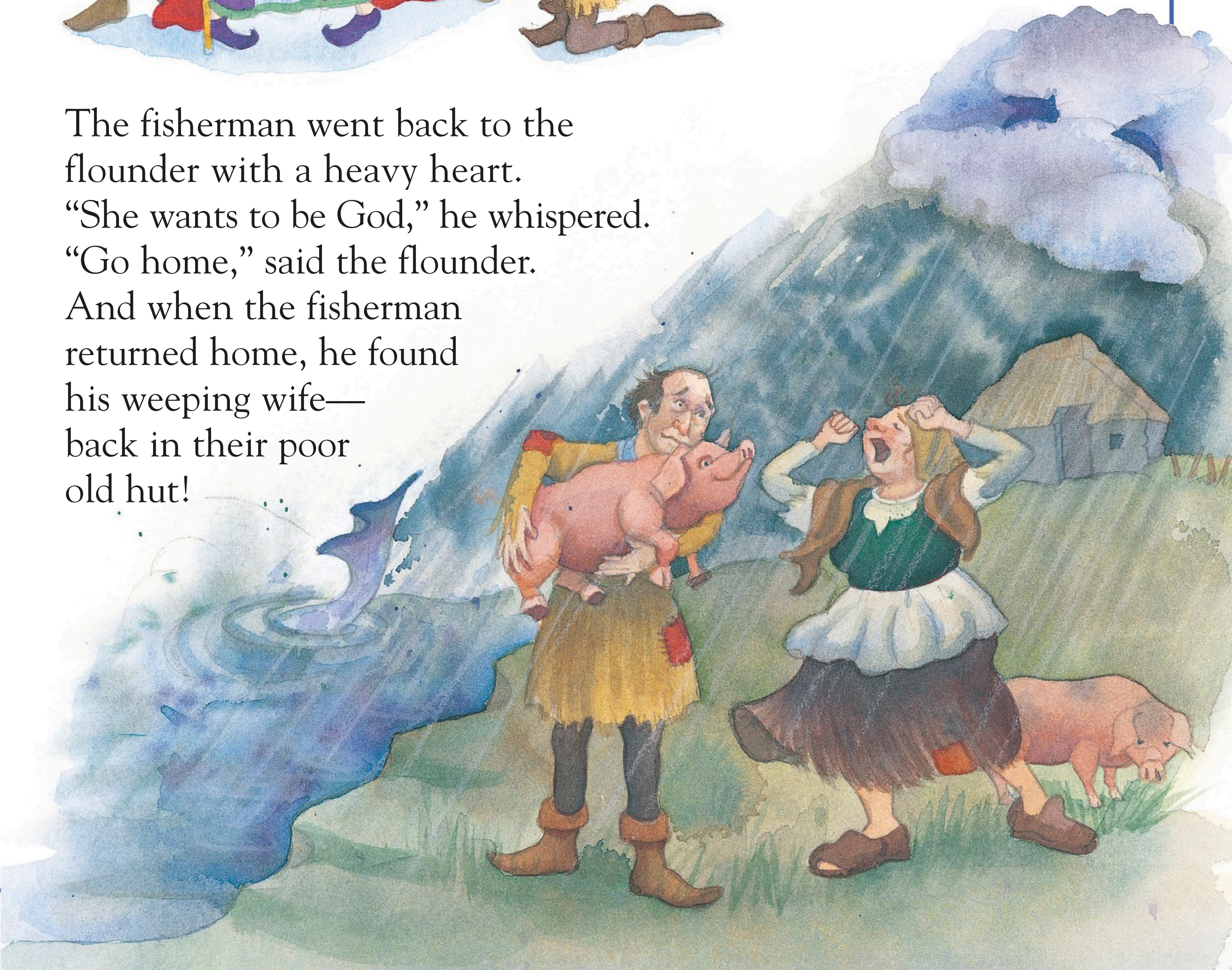
Next, the wife wanted to be the emperor. When the fisherman got back from that errand, he could hardly find his wife in the vast imperial palace.





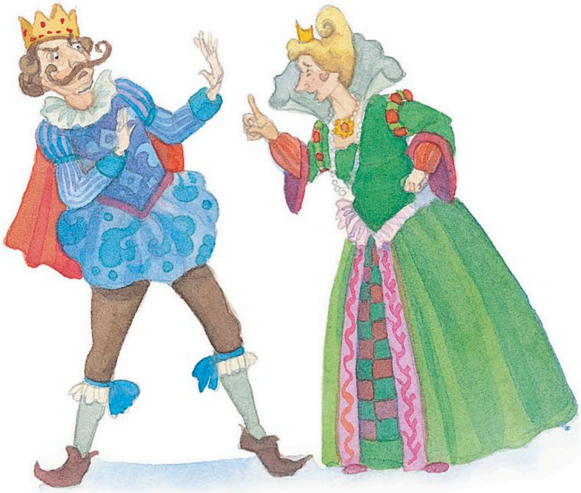
She was surrounded
by guards and servants.
“Surely you are happy
now, wife?” pleaded the
fisherman. She thought
for a bit and then said,
“No. I want to be God.”

The fisherman went back to the
flounder with a heavy heart.
“She wants to be God,” he whispered.
“Go home,” said the flounder.
And when the fisherman
returned home, he found
his weeping wife—
back in their poor
old hut!

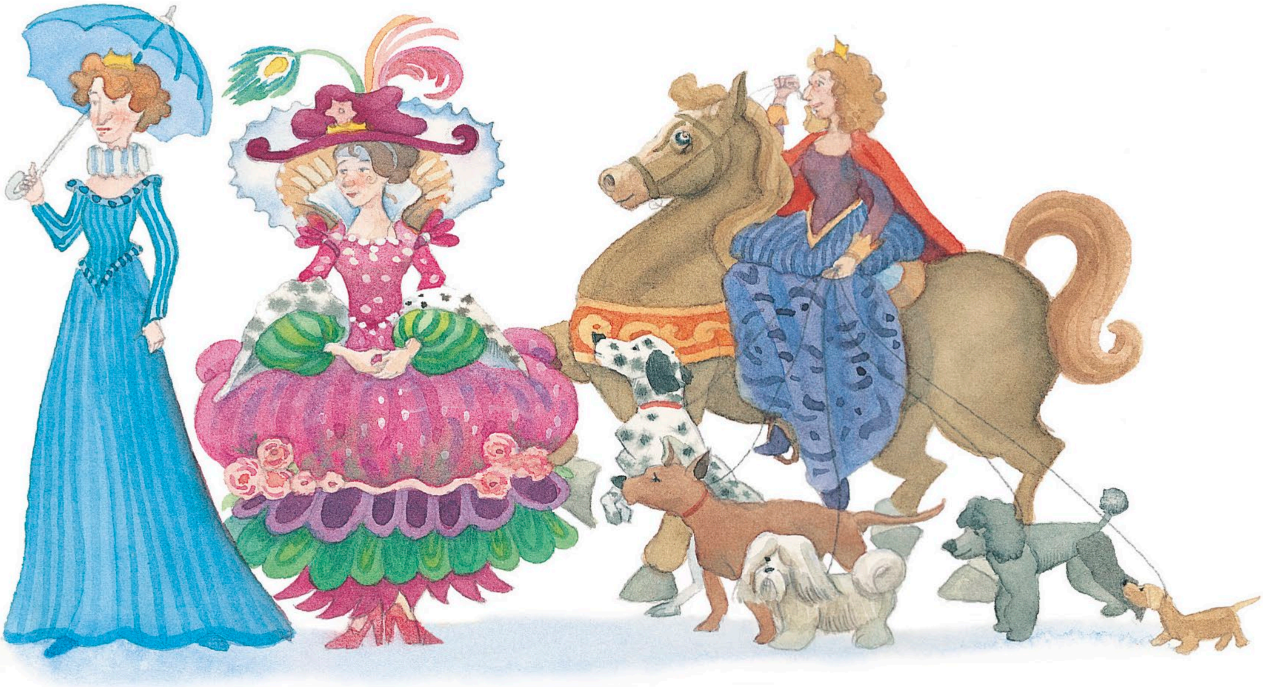


The Princess and the Pea

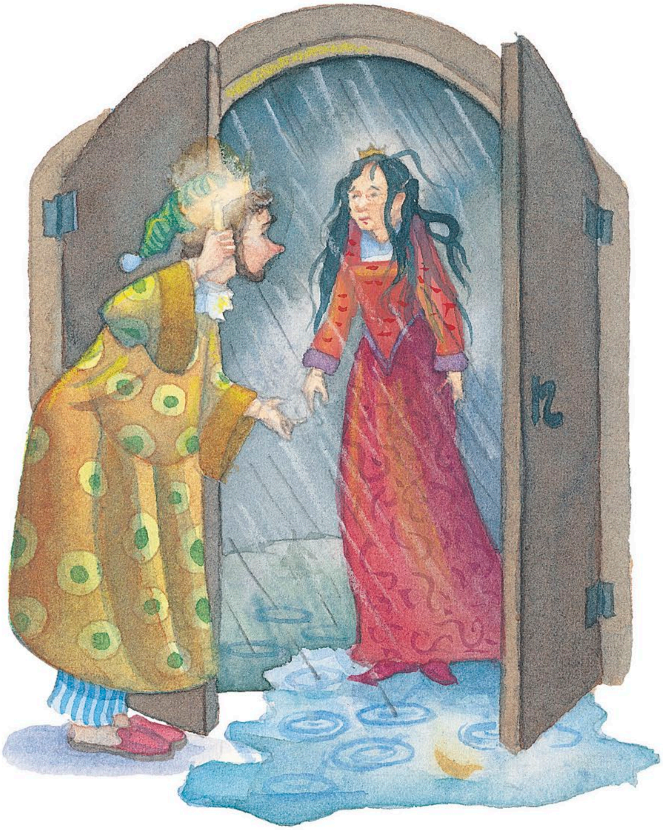
There was once a prince who was looking for a wife. Only a real princess would do, and he was very fussy about what she must be like. He went on long journeys to find the right one. But every princess that he found had something wrong with her.



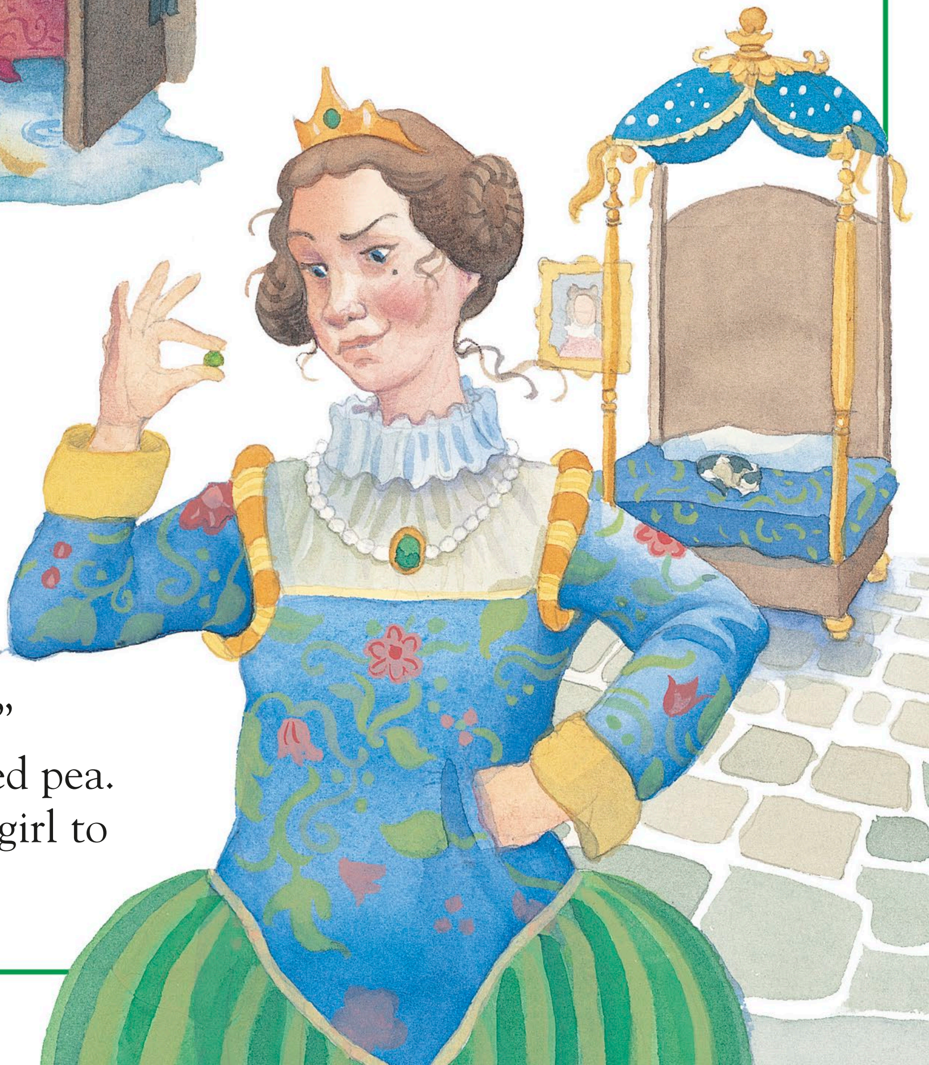
One was bad tempered …



one was too tall, one wore silly clothes, and one had too many dogs!

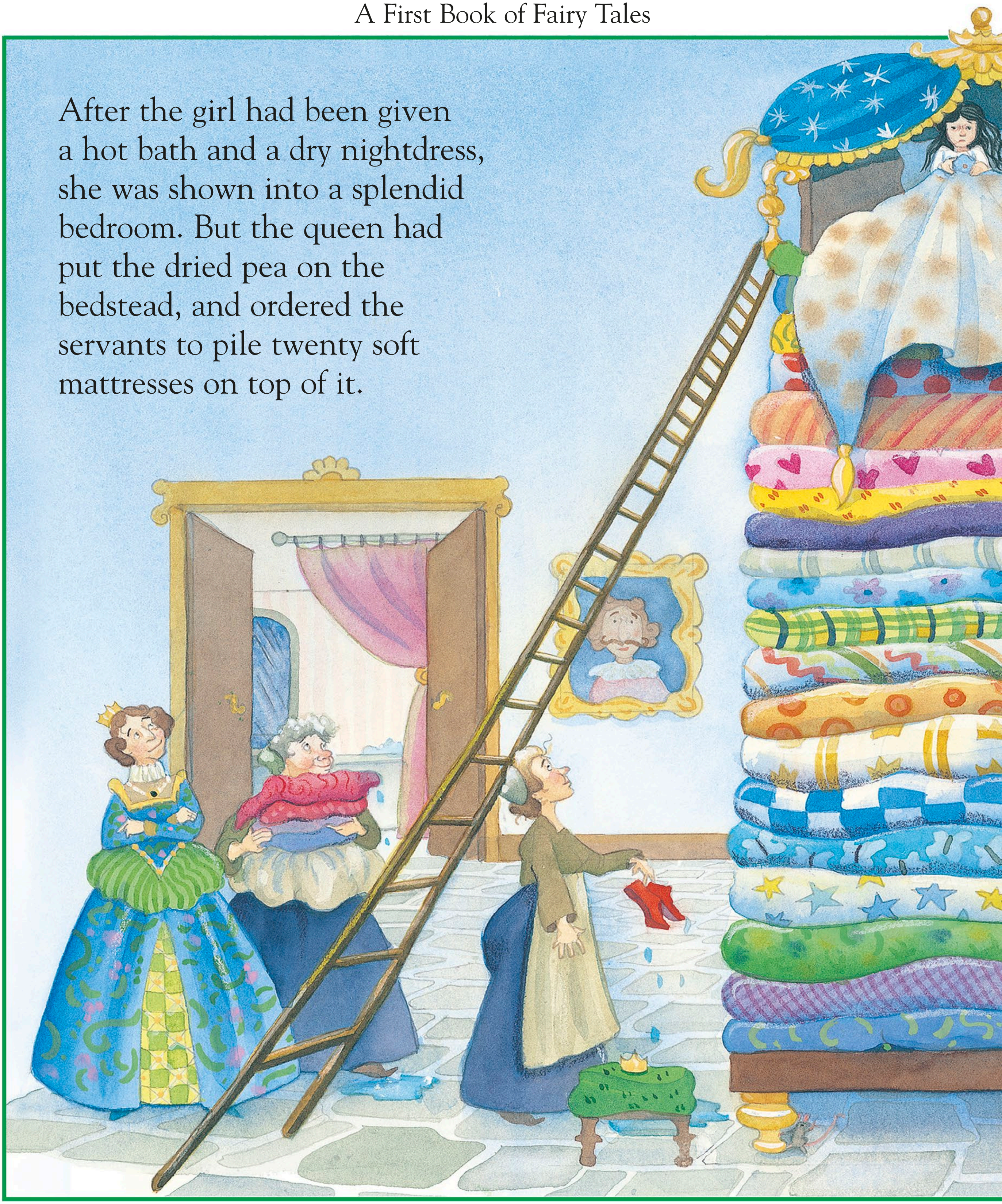


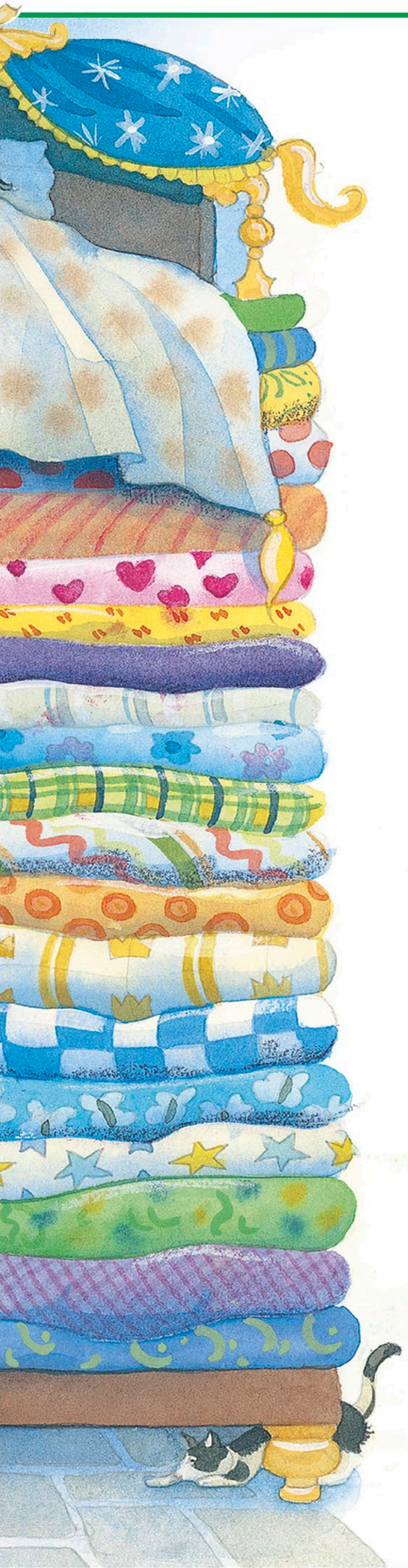
Then one night, in the middle of a terrible storm, there was a knock at the castle door. Outside stood a very wet and bedraggled girl, who said she was a princess. She certainly didn't look like one.



The queen had an idea. "We'll soon find out whether she's a real princess or not," she said. "I have a test that will prove it." She found a hard, dried pea. Then she invited the girl to stay the night.

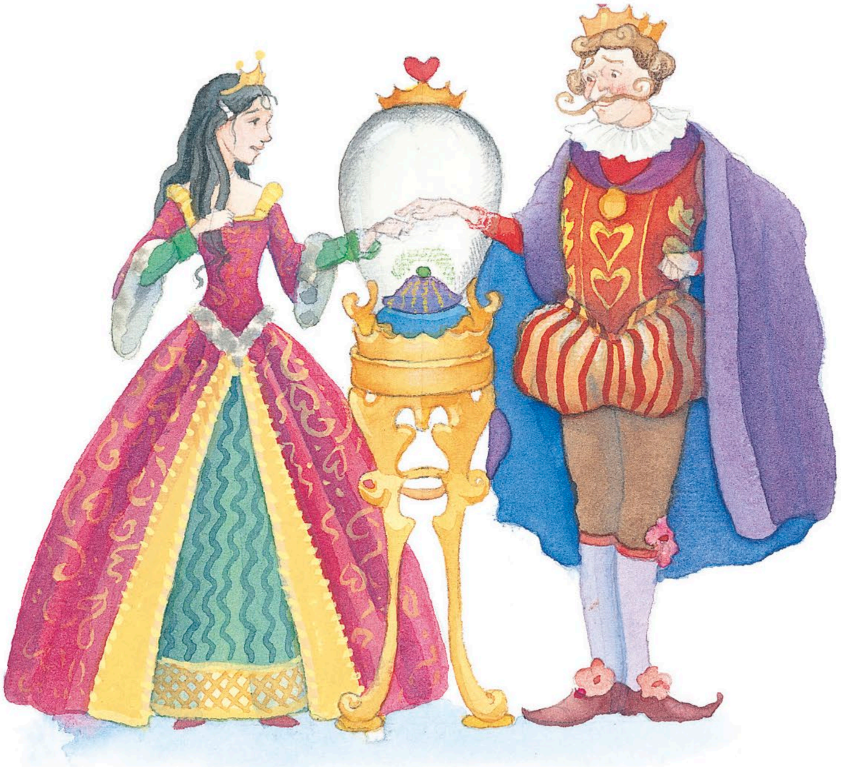
After the girl had been given a hot bath and a dry nightdress, she was shown into a splendid bedroom. But the queen had put the dried pea on the bedstead, and ordered the servants to pile twenty soft mattresses on top of it.



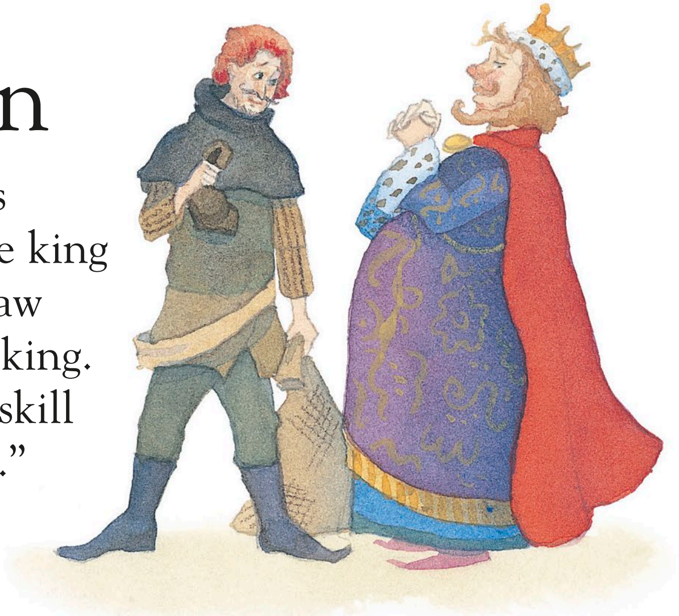


In the morning, the poor girl
said she had had a dreadful night.
"I was so uncomfortable," she said.
"There was something hard in the bed,
and I tossed and turned all night."

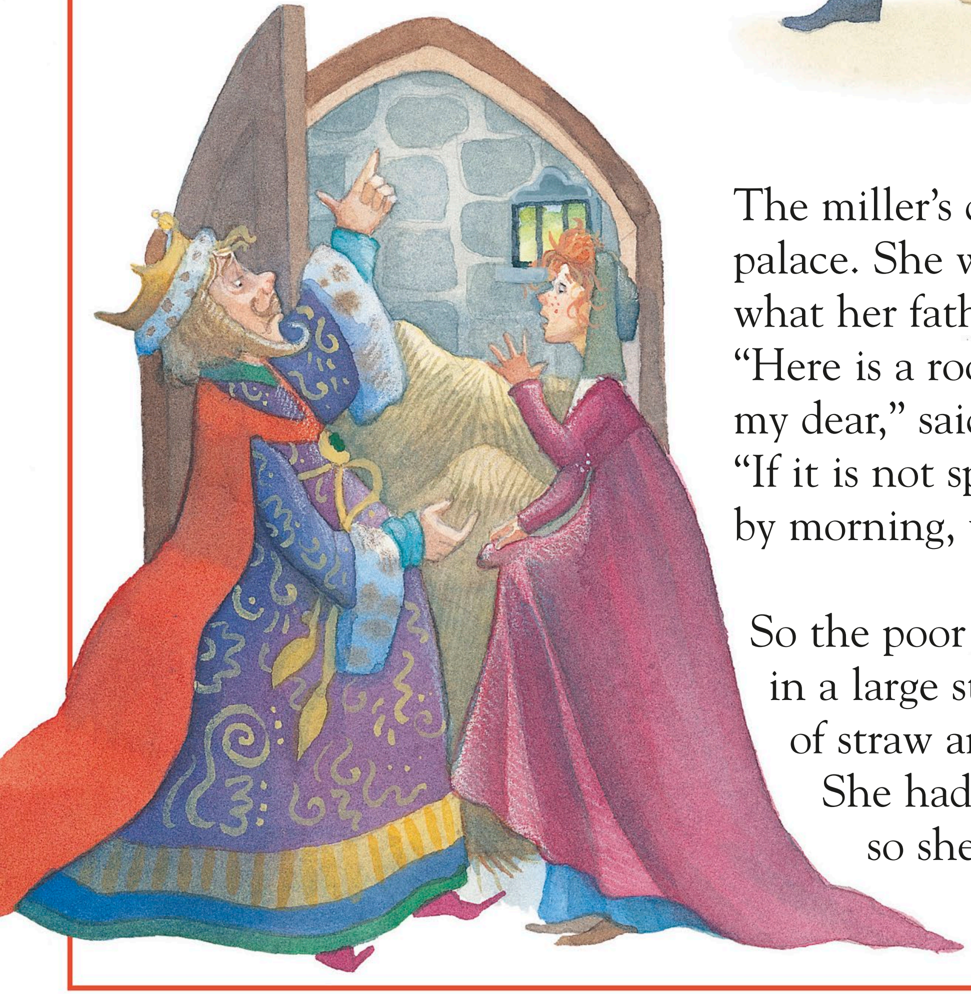
"What a sensitive creature!" said the
prince. "Only a real princess could feel
a pea through so many mattresses."
So they married and lived happily
ever after. As for the pea, it was put
in a glass case in the palace museum,
and you can see it there to this day.



Rumpelstiltskin



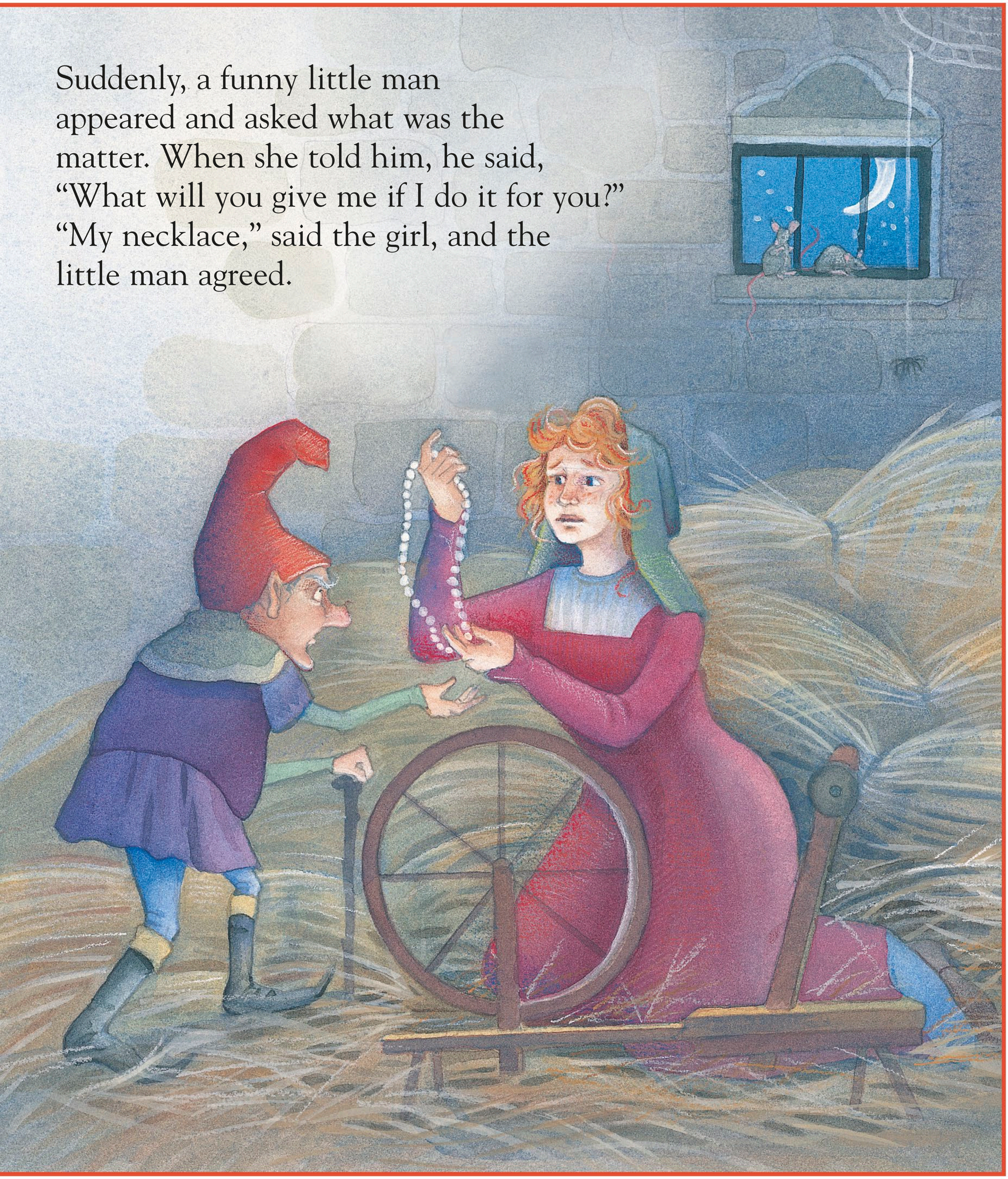
Once upon a time, there was a miller who boasted to the king that his daughter could spin straw into gold. "Oh really?" said the king. "Then bring her to me. Such a skill will be very useful in my palace."

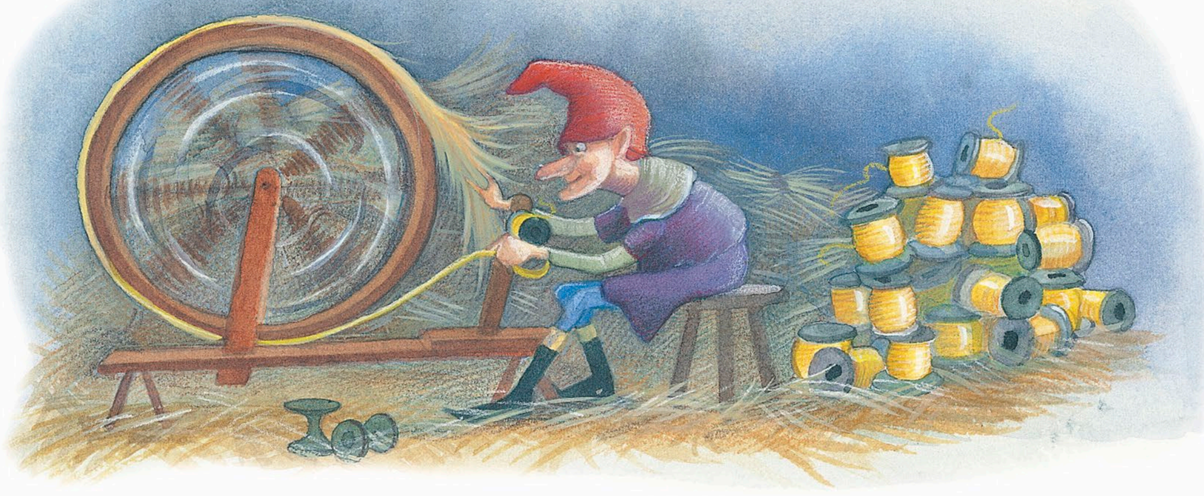


The miller's daughter came to the palace. She was horrified to learn what her father had been saying. "Here is a room full of straw, my dear," said the king. "If it is not spun into gold by morning, you will die."

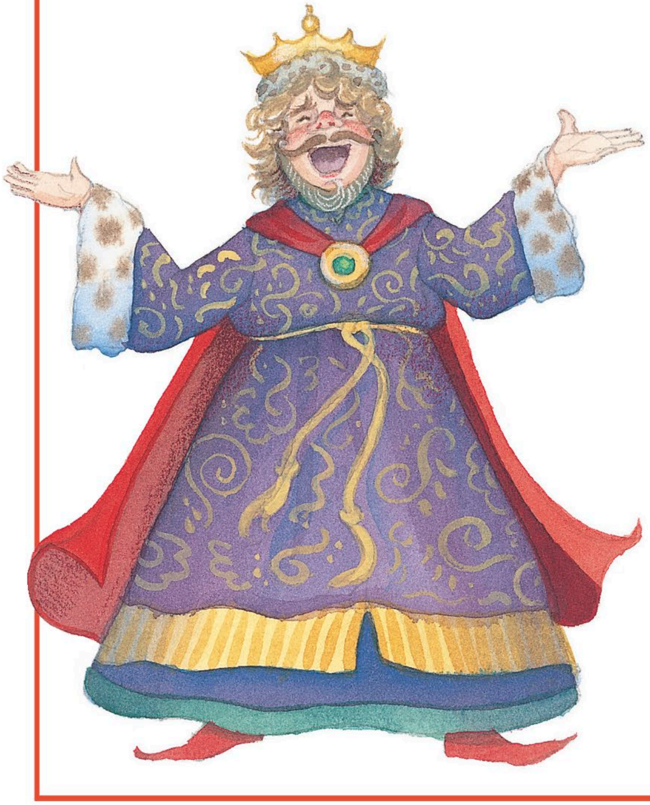
So the poor girl was locked up in a large storeroom with lots of straw and a spinning wheel. She had no idea what to do, so she burst into tears.

Suddenly, a funny little man appeared and asked what was the matter. When she told him, he said, "What will you give me if I do it for you?" "My necklace," said the girl, and the little man agreed.





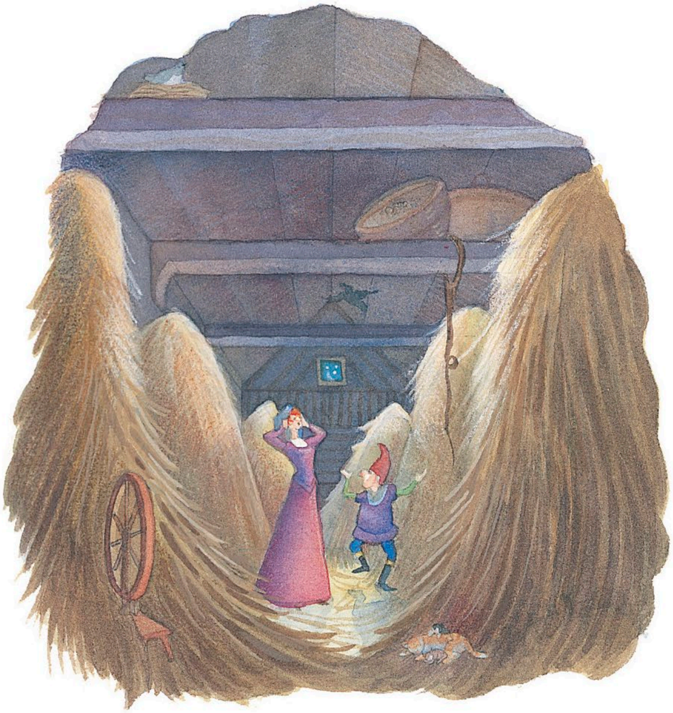
The little man set to work and soon the room was full of reels of gold. The miller's daughter looked on in amazement. In the morning, the little man disappeared.

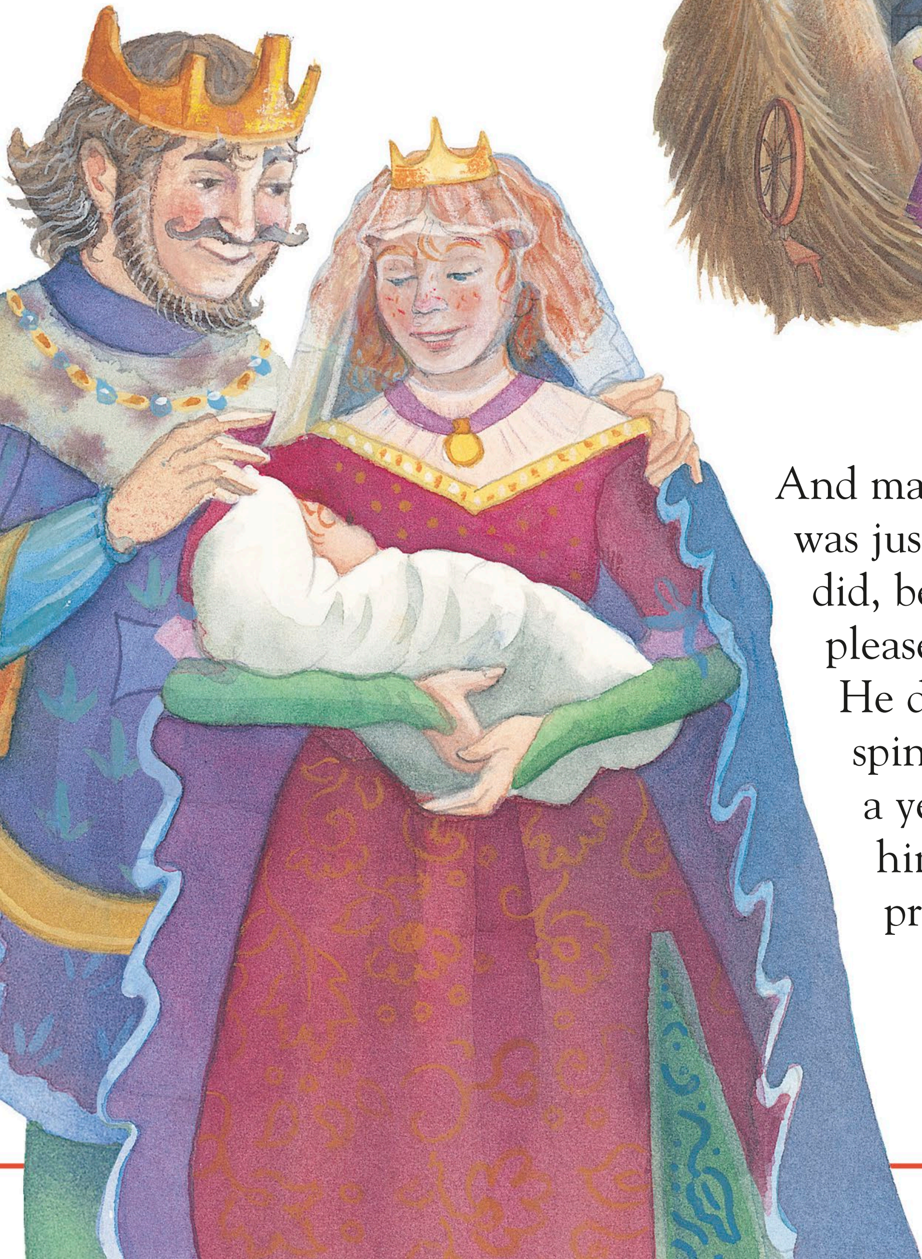


When the king came in, he was delighted with the girl. But he was greedy, too, so he gave her an even larger room full of straw to turn to gold.

The girl was even more desperate. Then, as if by magic, the little man appeared again. "What will you give me this time?" he asked. The girl gave him her ring.

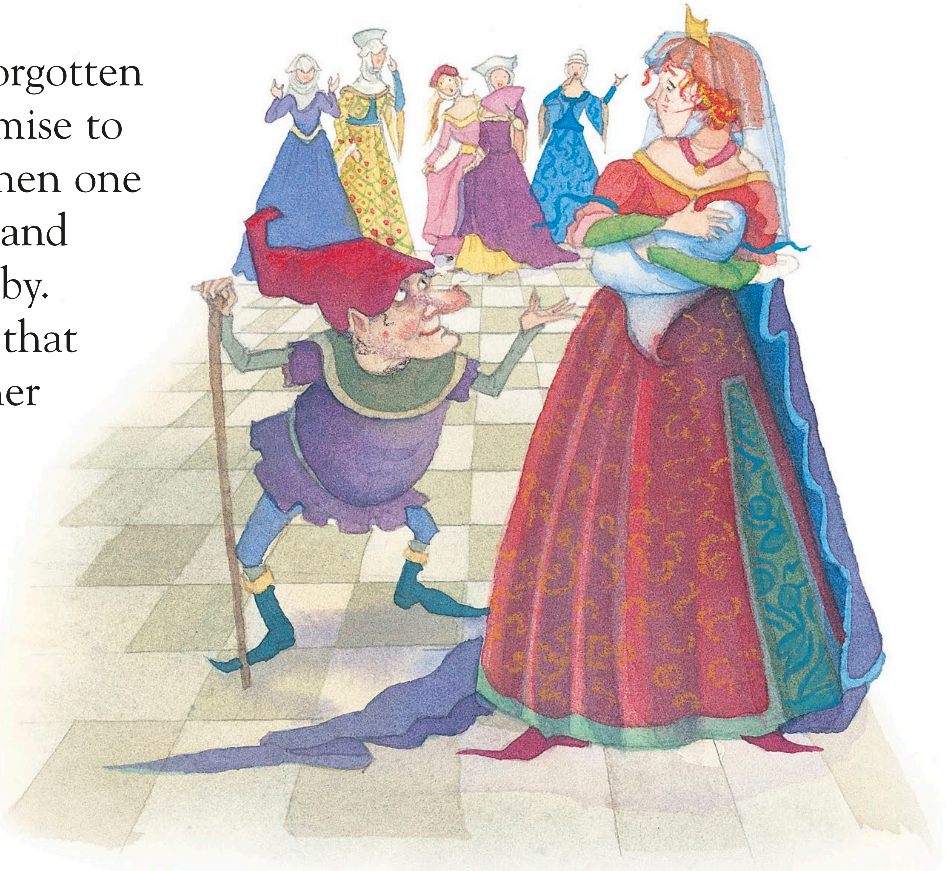
But on the third night, when she was locked in a huge barn, she had nothing left to give the little man. "I'll take your first-born child if you marry the king," he said.



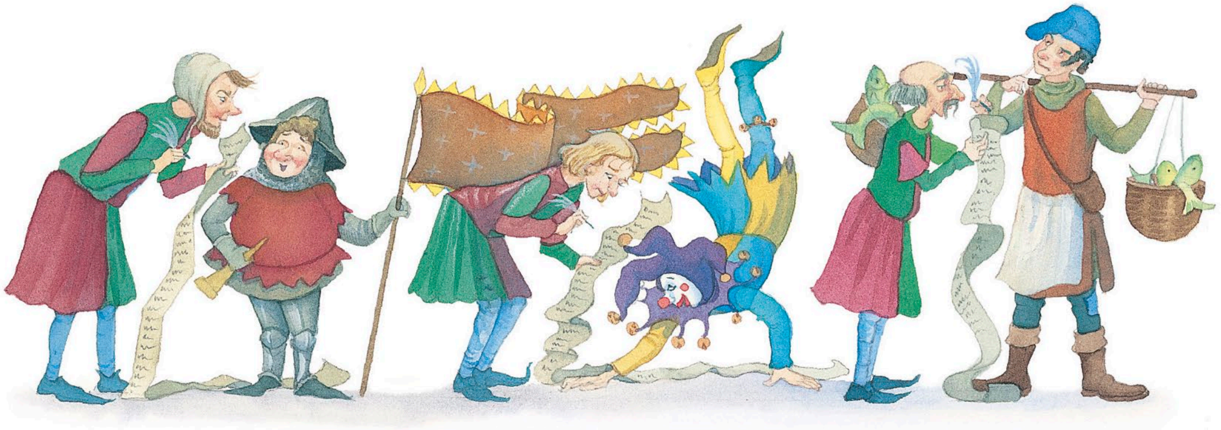


And marry the king was just what the girl did, because he was so pleased with all the gold. He didn't ask the girl to spin any more gold, but a year later, she gave him something more precious—a baby son.

The queen had forgotten all about her promise to the little man. Then one day, he appeared and demanded the baby. She was so upset that he took pity on her and said, "If you can guess my name within the next three days, you may keep the child."

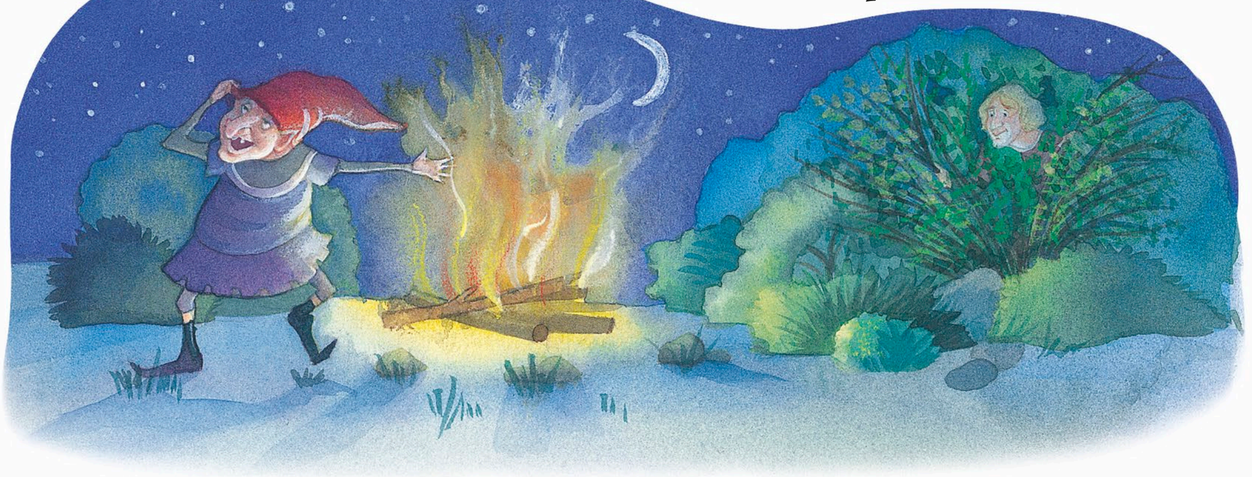


For two frantic days the queen guessed, "Casper, Melchior, Big Ears, Balthasar, Bottlenose …?" But nothing was right. So she sent her servants out far and wide to search for unusual names.

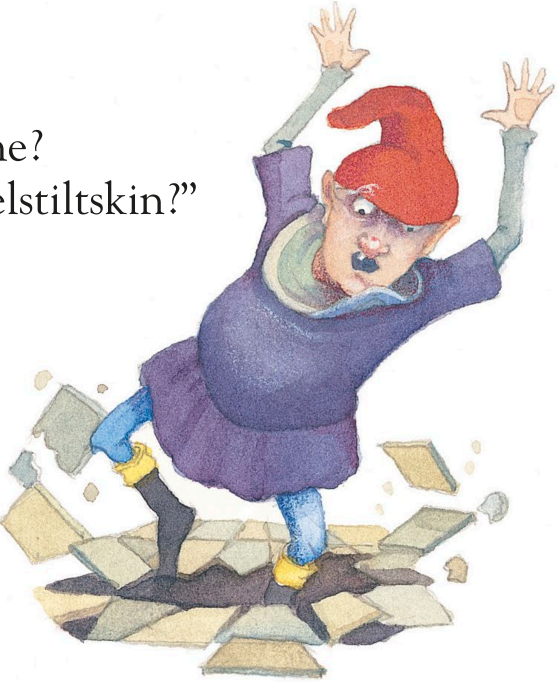


The next day, a servant came back and said he had seen a funny little man dancing around a fire in the forest, singing,

"I'll win the baby and the game. Rumpelstiltskin is my name!"

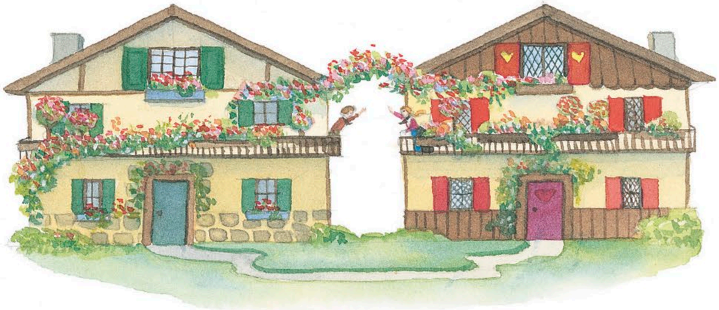


So when the little man came back, the queen said, "Is your name Wayne? Is it Darren? Is it perhaps … Rumpelstiltskin?"

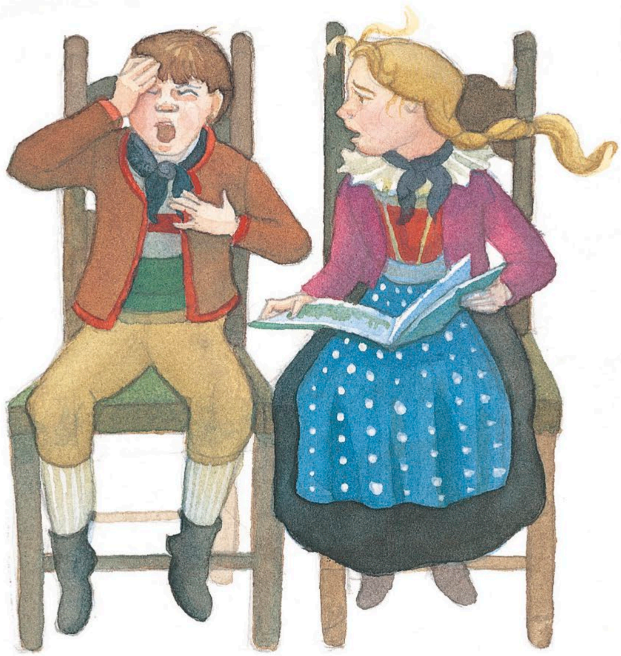


The little man jumped up and down with rage. "Who told you? Who told you?" he roared, stomping his foot on the ground so hard that it went straight through! He disappeared and was never seen again.

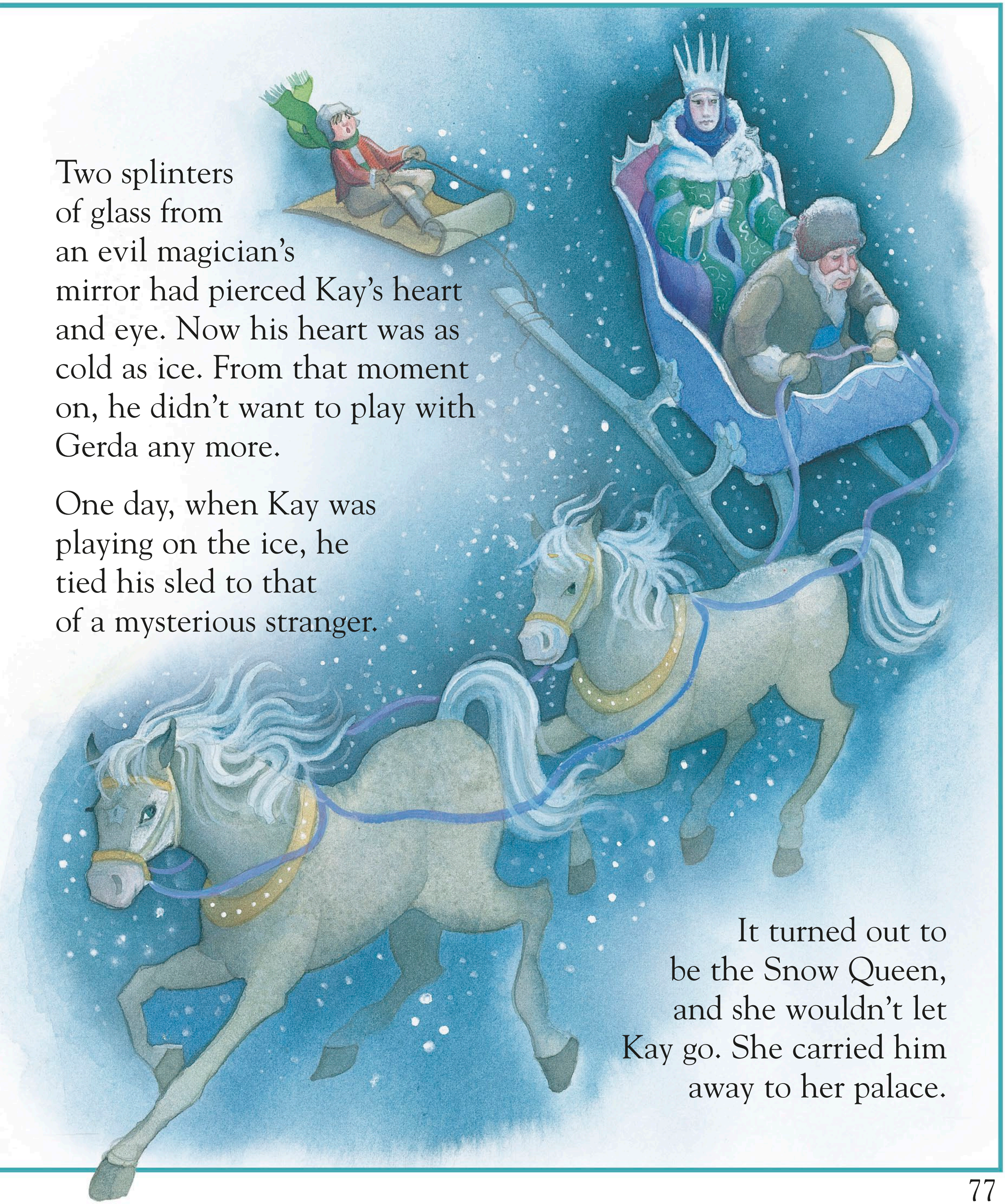
The Snow Queen



Once, there was a boy called Kay and a girl called Gerda, who were best friends. They were as close as brother and sister, and they lived next door to each other. Roses grew in the window boxes of their two houses and entwined together. In the summer, the children could sit on their balconies and talk to each other. In the winter, they played in each other's houses.



One winter, when Kay was visiting Gerda and her grandmother, the children were reading their favorite book by the fireplace. Suddenly, Kay called out in pain. "My heart," he cried, "and my eye!"

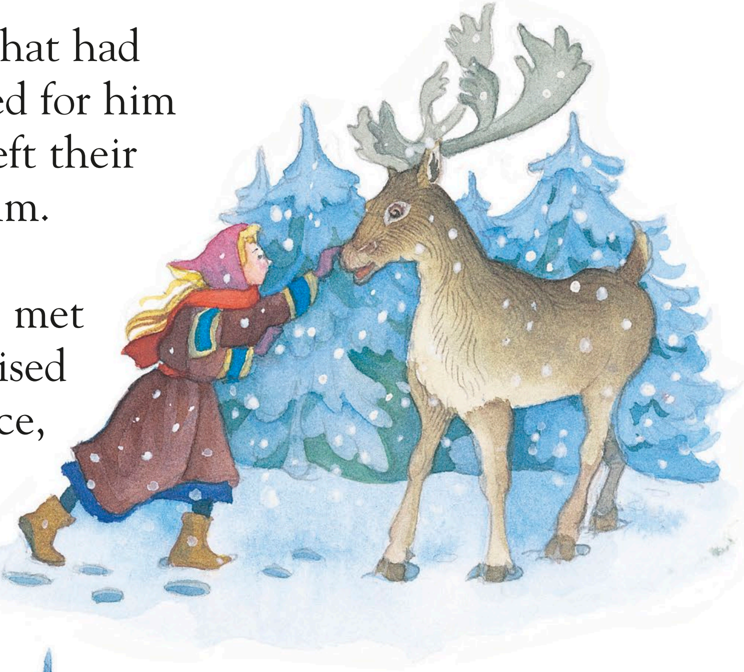


Two splinters of glass from an evil magician's mirror had pierced Kay's heart and eye. Now his heart was as cold as ice. From that moment on, he didn't want to play with Gerda any more.

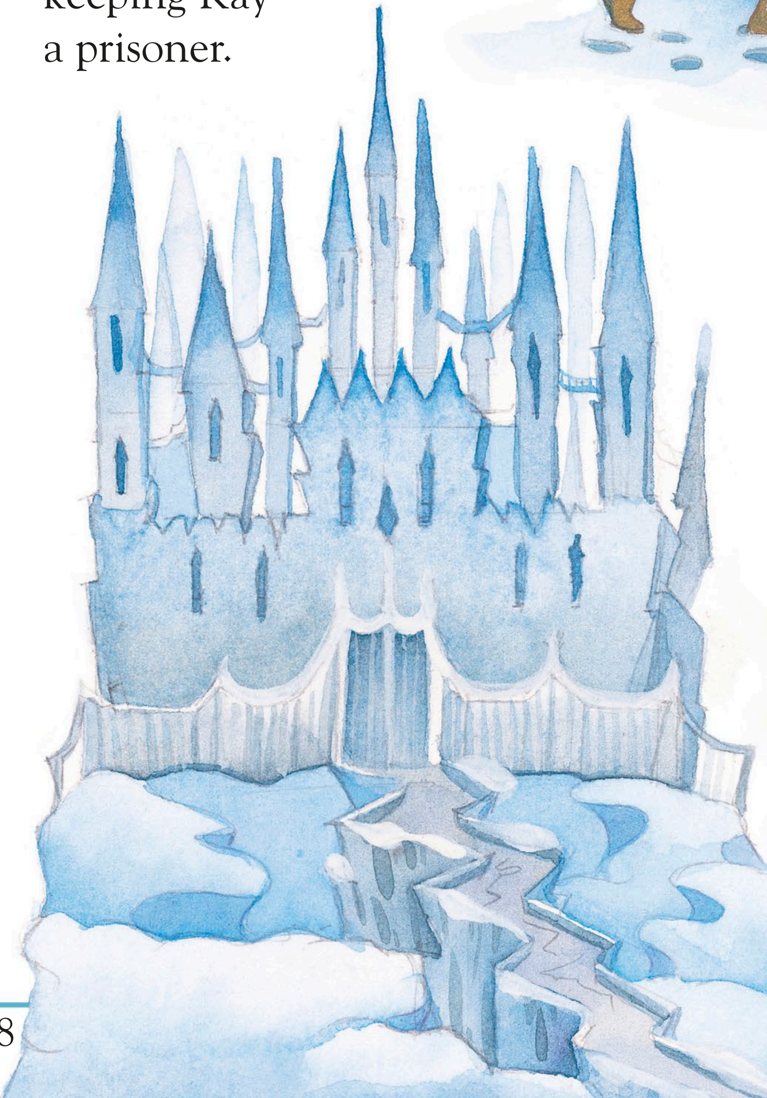
One day, when Kay was playing on the ice, he tied his sled to that of a mysterious stranger.

It turned out to be the Snow Queen, and she wouldn't let Kay go. She carried him away to her palace.

Gerda couldn't understand what had happened to Kay and searched for him everywhere. In the end she left their village, determined to find him.

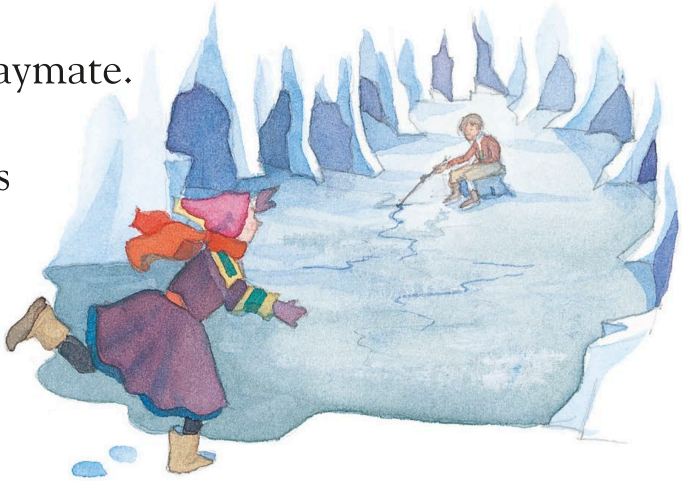


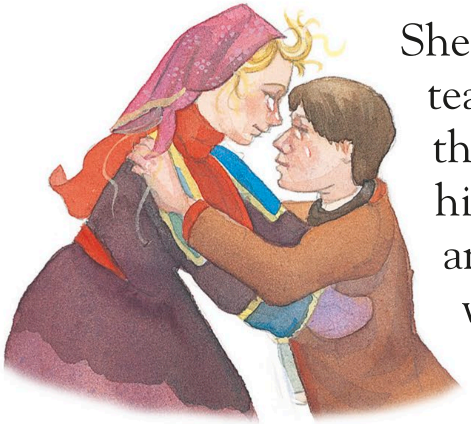
After weeks of searching, she met a talking reindeer, who promised to take her to the Palace of Ice, where the Snow Queen was keeping Kay a prisoner.



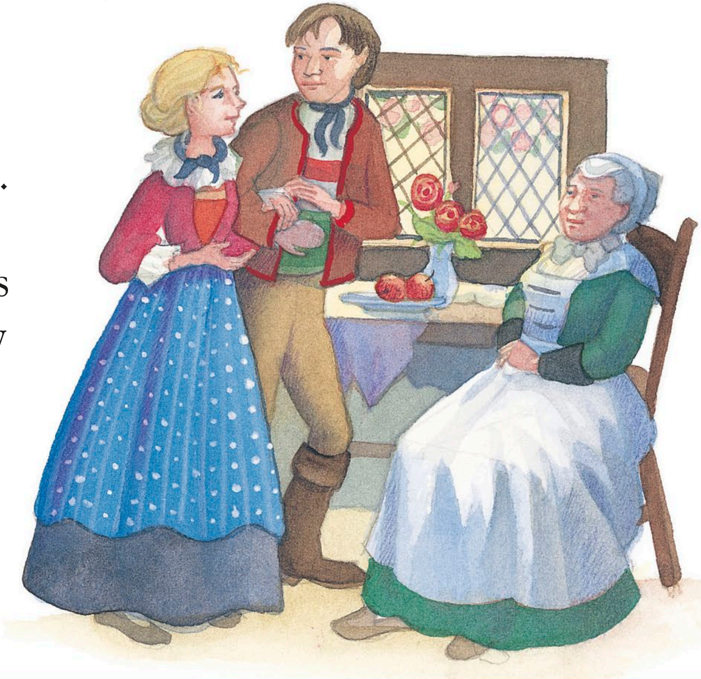
Gerda had never been so cold in her life. The palace was made of ice. She ran through halls of icicles and corridors of packed snow, until she came to a vast room with a frozen lake in the middle.

And on the lake sat her old playmate. "Kay!" cried Gerda, but he did not know her. Gerda ran across the lake, slipping and sliding. "It's me, Gerda," she said. But still he did not recognize her. Gerda could not bear it.





She started to cry and her hot tears fell on Kay's chest, melting the splinter of magic glass inside his heart. Then Kay cried, too, and the splinter in his eye was washed away. Now they were friends again.



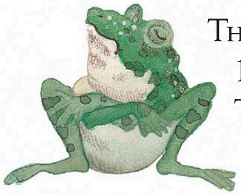
Kay and Gerda returned home. Gerda's grandmother was waiting for them, and the roses were in full bloom. When they looked in the mirror, Kay and Gerda saw that they had now grown up. But they still felt like children at heart.

About the Storytellers

We know the names of some of the people who made up the stories in this book. But others have been collected from people who heard them from their grandparents and passed them onto their own grandchildren.

Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875) wrote "The Princess and the Pea," "The Little Mermaid," and "The Snow Queen," among many others. He made them up, but based some of the ideas on stories he heard as a child in Denmark.

Madame de Beaumont (1711–1780) was a Frenchwoman who became a governess in England. Her English version of French author Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve's "Beauty and the Beast" came out in 1761 and became the best-known version of this tale, which has its origins as far back as 100 CE.

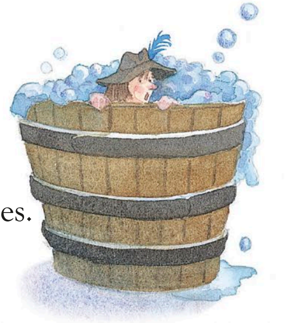


The Brothers Grimm (Jacob 1785–1863 and Wilhelm 1786–1859) collected their fairy tales from ordinary country people. They published three volumes of tales (in 1812, 1815, and 1822) using the language of the German village people.

Charles Perrault (1628–1703) wrote his own versions of "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Diamonds and Toads" in 1697. They were translated into English in 1729 and became very popular.

Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) wrote many wonderful plays and stories for grown-ups. "The Selfish Giant" is one of the nine fairy tales he made up and published between 1888 and 1891.

Traditional English Tales
"Jack and the Beanstalk" is one of many traditional English tales that form the basis of English Christmas pantomimes. It first appeared in print in 1807, but was known for at least seventy years before that. No one knows who made it up.



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The Princess and the Pea • Rumpelstiltskin • The Snow Queen

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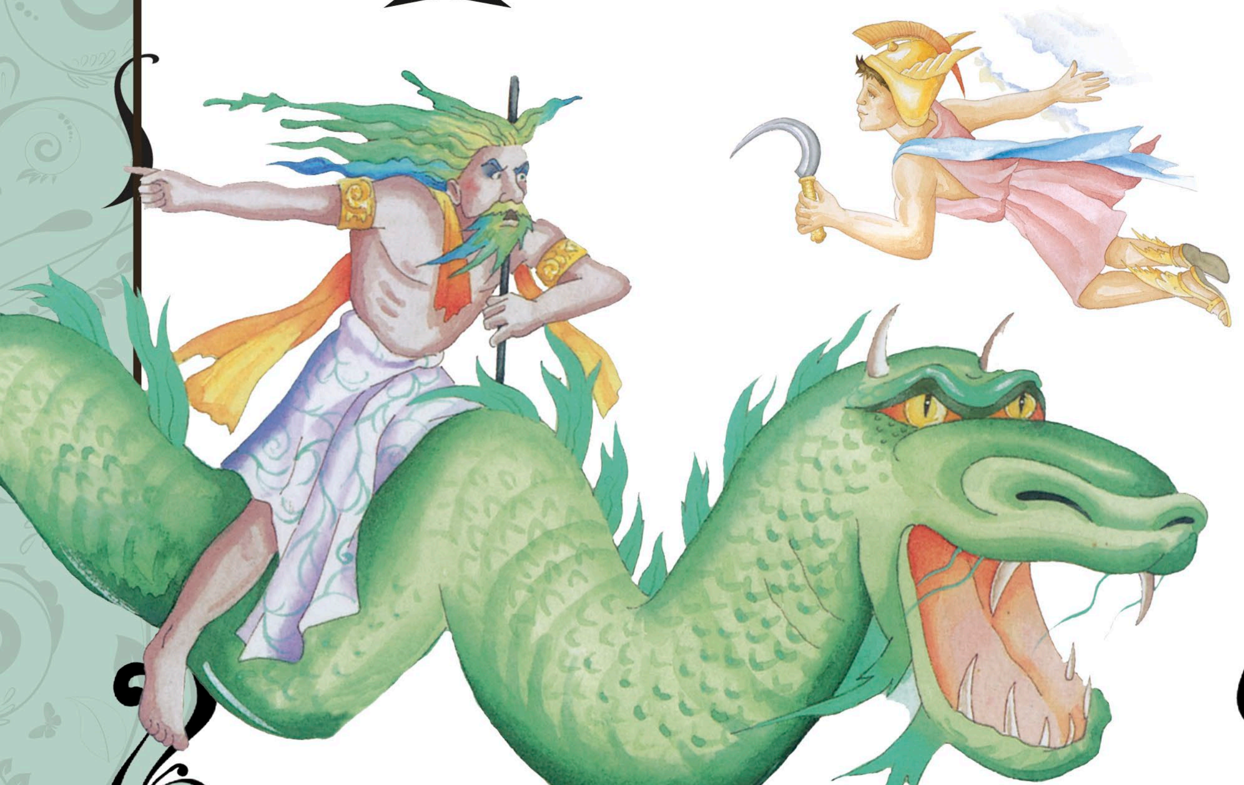

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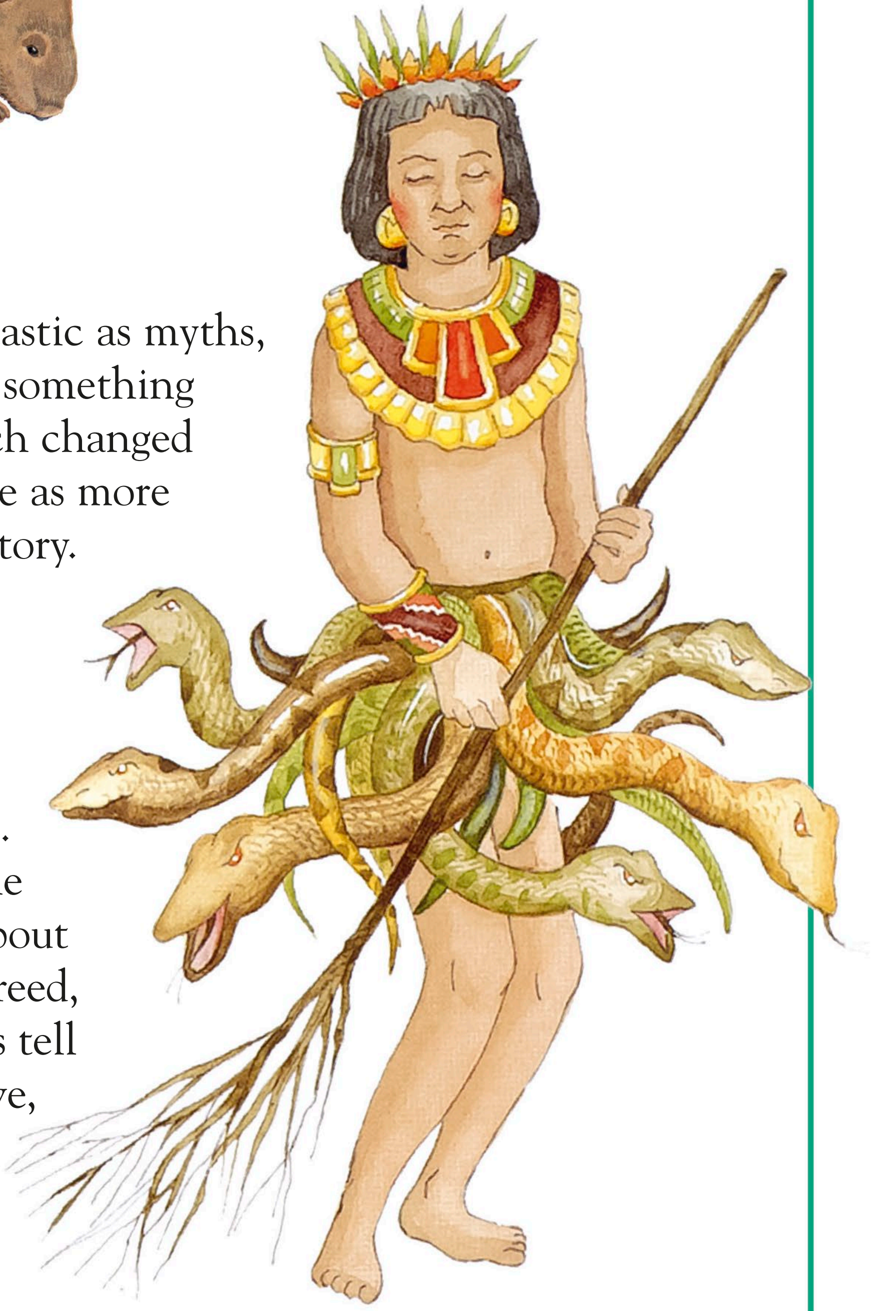
Introduction

What's the difference between a myth and a legend? Myths are stories invented by people thousands of years ago to explain what they could see around them. In myths, gods and goddesses create the earth, sky, and oceans. They put the sun, moon, and stars in the sky and people and animals on earth. But they act like ordinary people, too, having arguments and feeling sad and throwing tantrums, which explains events like the changing seasons, storms and earthquakes, floods, and volcanoes.

Then there are legends: stories about heroes and monsters, journeys to enchanted worlds, and the foundation of great cities.

Legends are almost as fantastic as myths, but may have grown from something that really happened, which changed and became more elaborate as more and more people told the story.



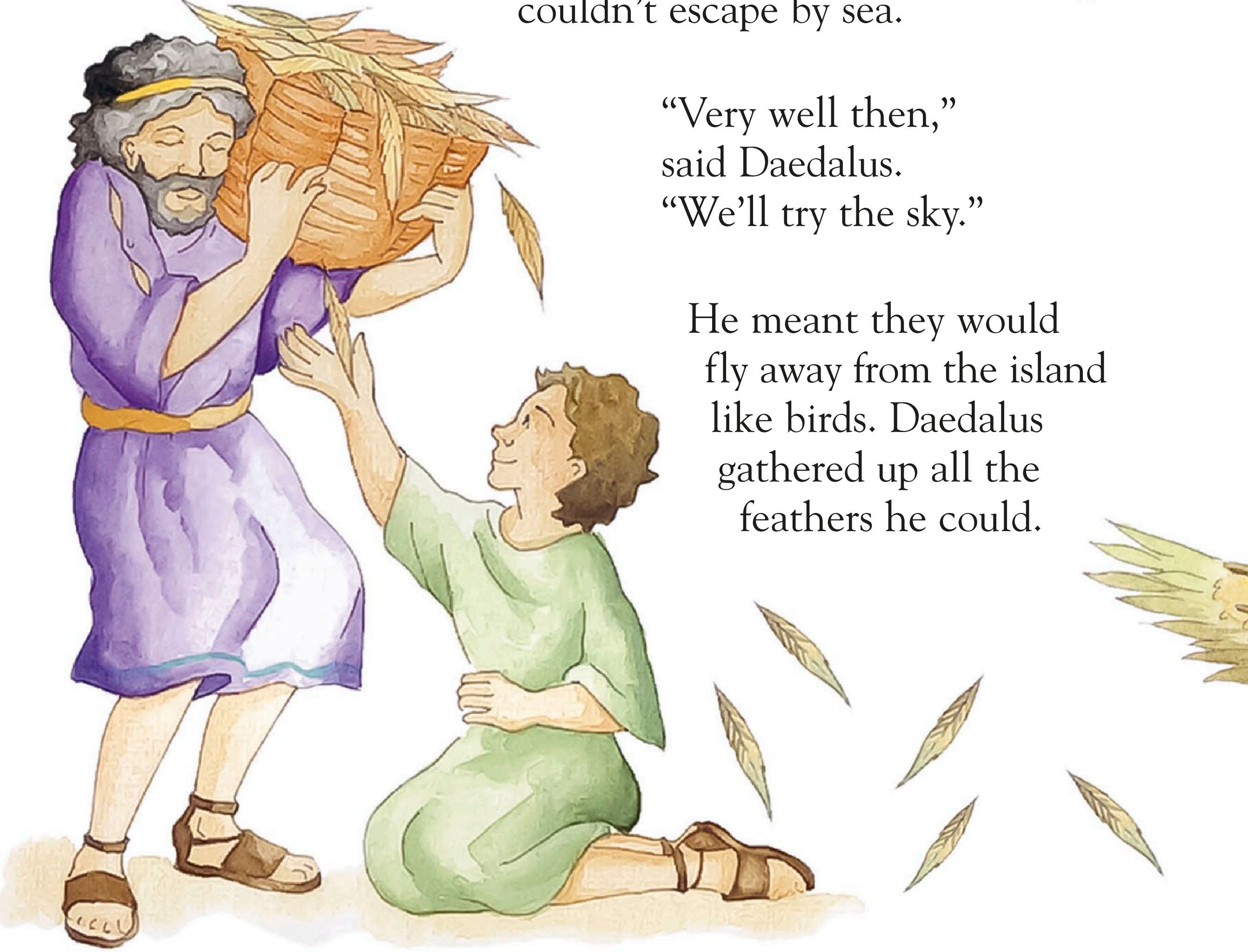
Just because the stories are mostly made up, it doesn't mean that myths and legends can't tell us truths. In this book there are some that show us bad things about being human, like envy, greed, and vanity. But other tales tell us about the good side—love, bravery, and friendship. And these qualities are still as much a part of our daily lives as they were thousands of years ago.

The Fall of Icarus

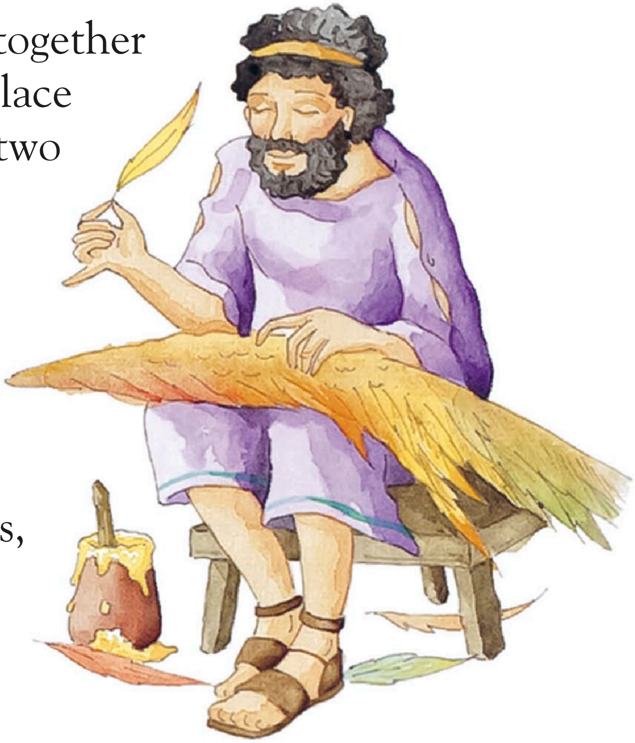
Daedalus the inventor was a prisoner on the island of Crete, with his son Icarus. King Minos was guarding all the harbors so that they couldn't escape by sea.

"Very well then," said Daedalus. "We'll try the sky."

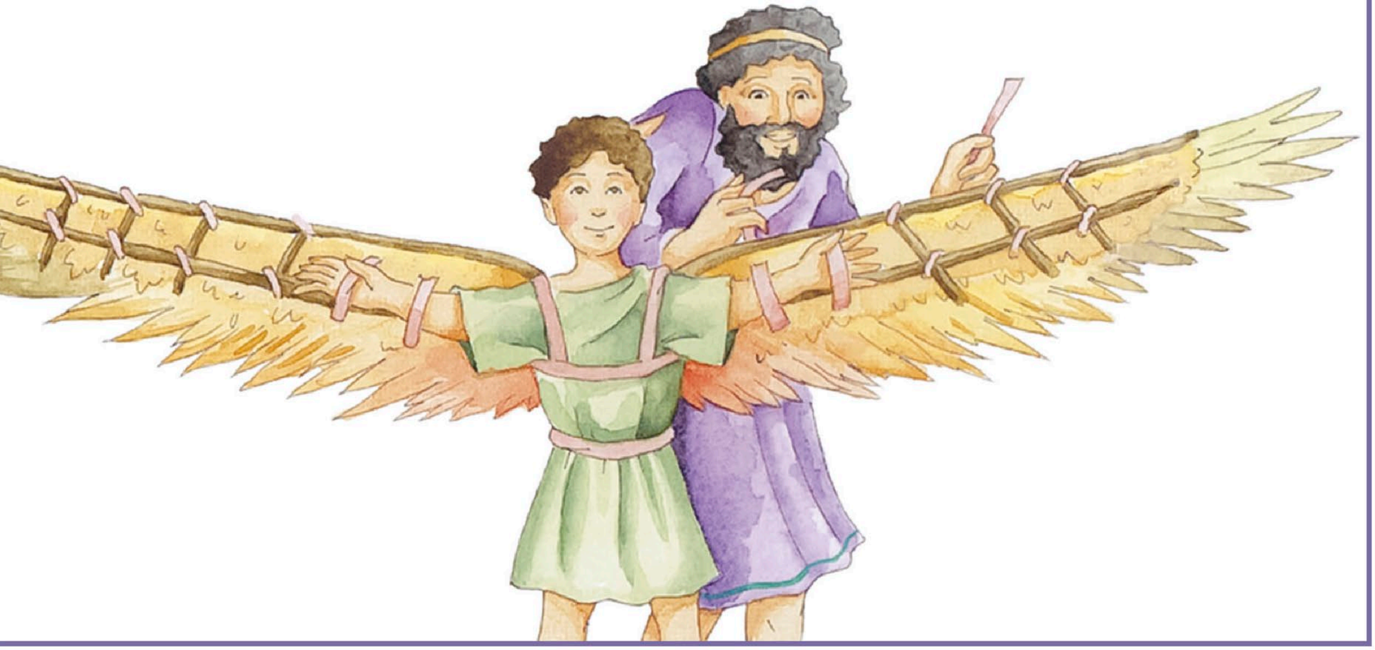
He meant they would fly away from the island like birds. Daedalus gathered up all the feathers he could.

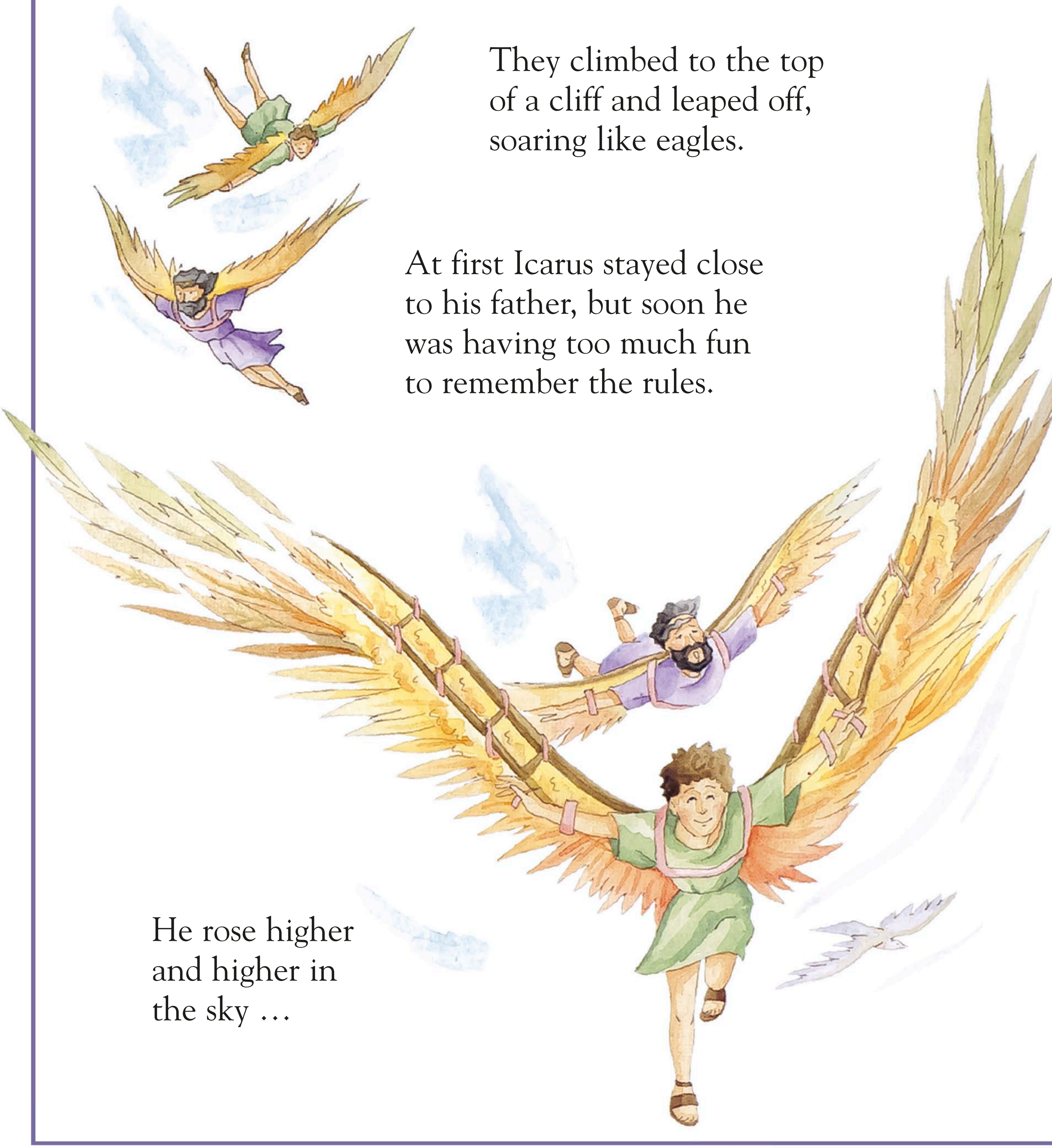


Then he tied them together
and stuck them in place
with wax to make two
pairs of wings.



"Now you can fly," said Daedalus, strapping the wings to Icarus's arms, "but there are some important rules. Stay close behind me and we will get home safely. Don't fly too high or the sun will melt the wax. And don't fly too low or the sea will make your feathers soggy."

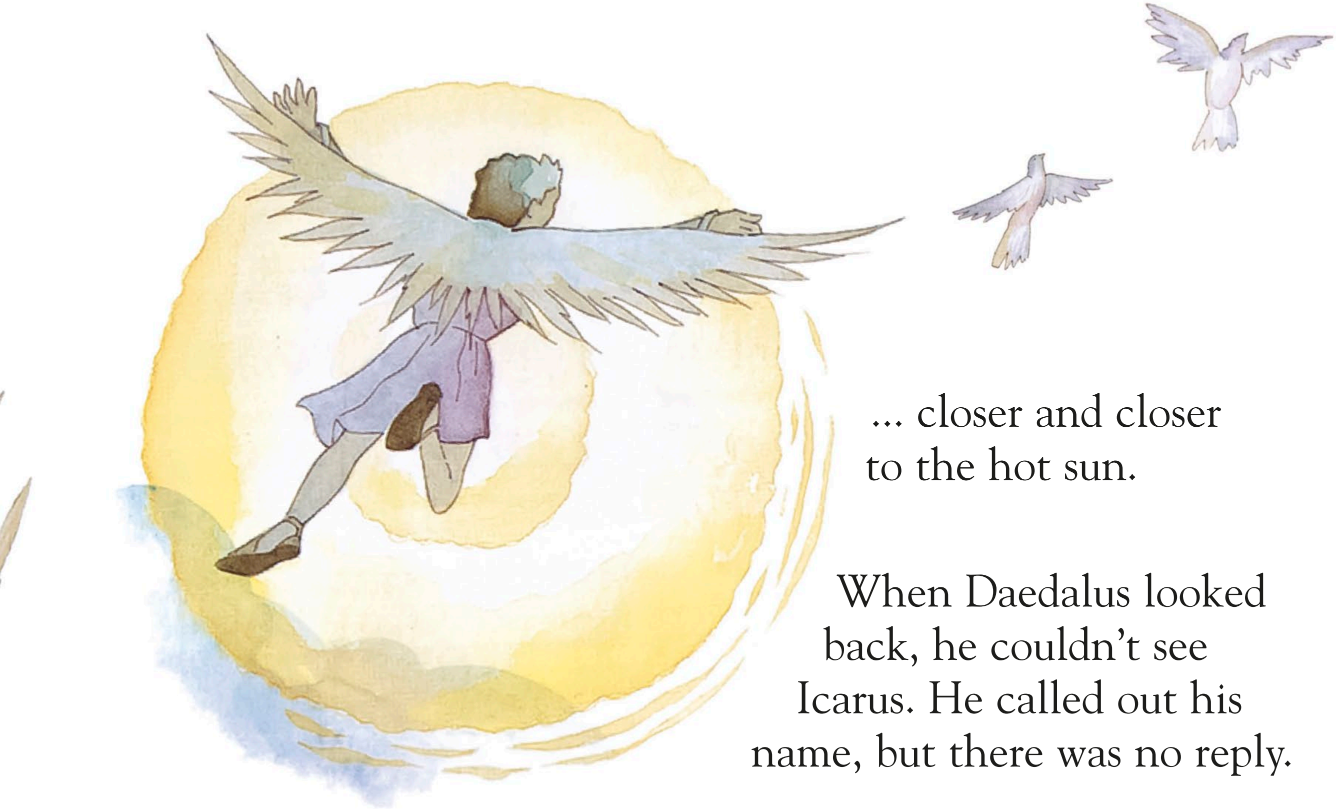




They climbed to the top
of a cliff and leaped off,
soaring like eagles.

At first Icarus stayed close
to his father, but soon he
was having too much fun
to remember the rules.

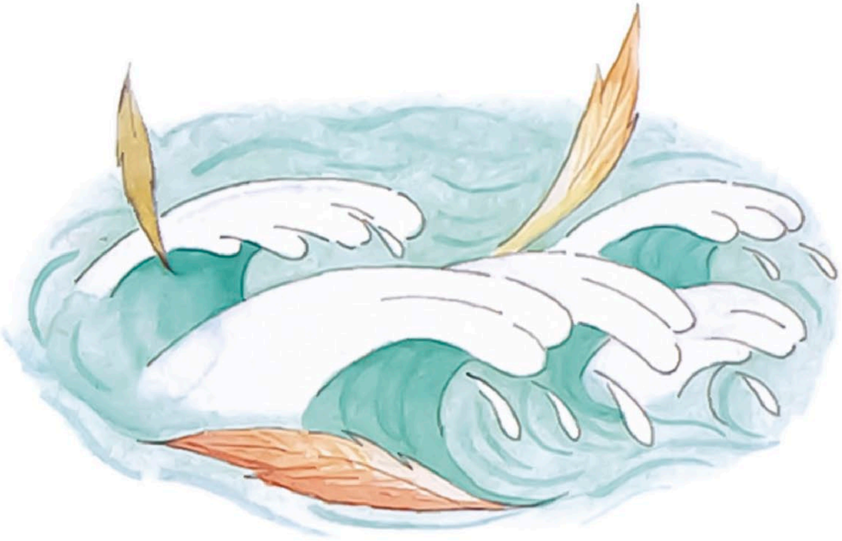
He rose higher
and higher in
the sky …

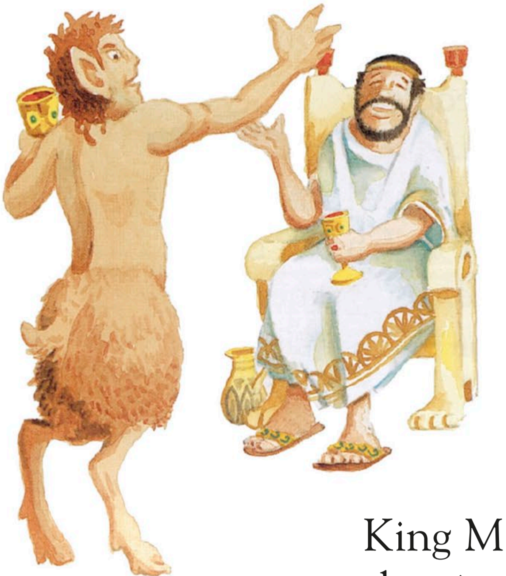


… closer and closer
to the hot sun.

When Daedalus looked back, he couldn't see Icarus. He called out his name, but there was no reply.

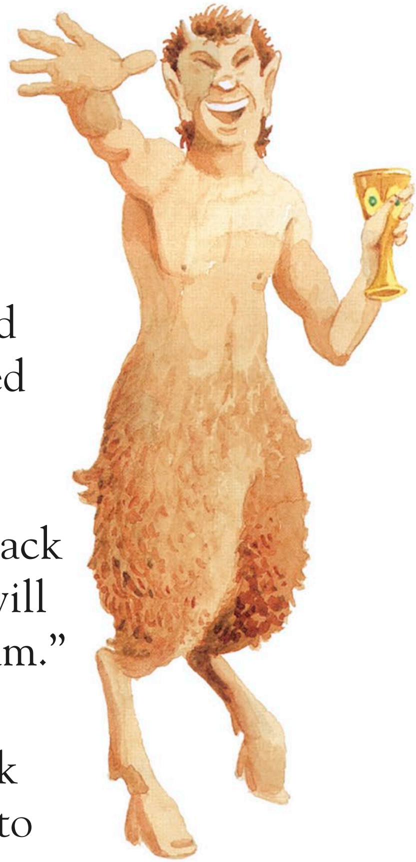
Daedalus spotted a few feathers floating on the waves below. Then he realized the wings had failed and Icarus had fallen into the sea.





The Golden Touch

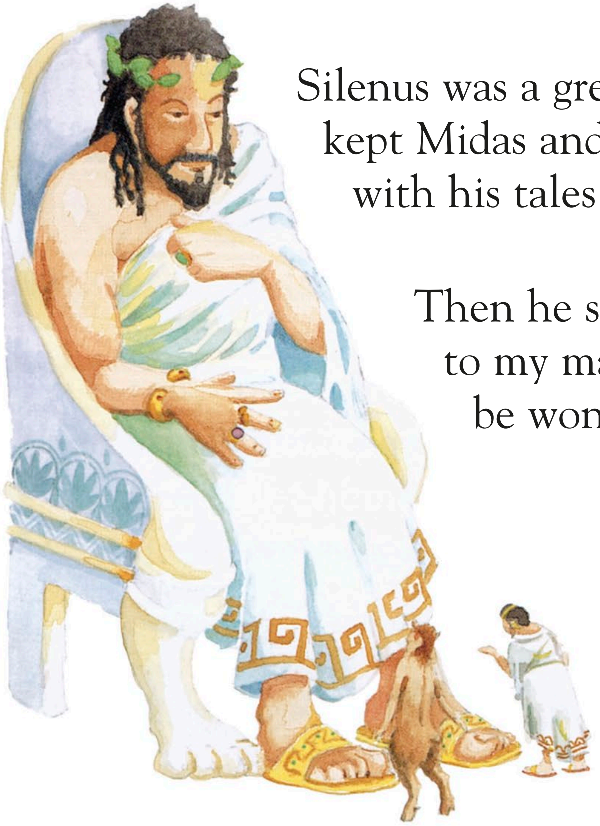
Silenus the satyr, half-man, half-goat, was lost. To tell the truth, he had drunk too much and fallen asleep in a garden, so his companions couldn't find him. They went home without him.



King Midas found the satyr sleeping in the palace rose garden. "You can stay here with me if you like," he said.

Silenus was a great storyteller and kept Midas and his court amused with his tales for five days.

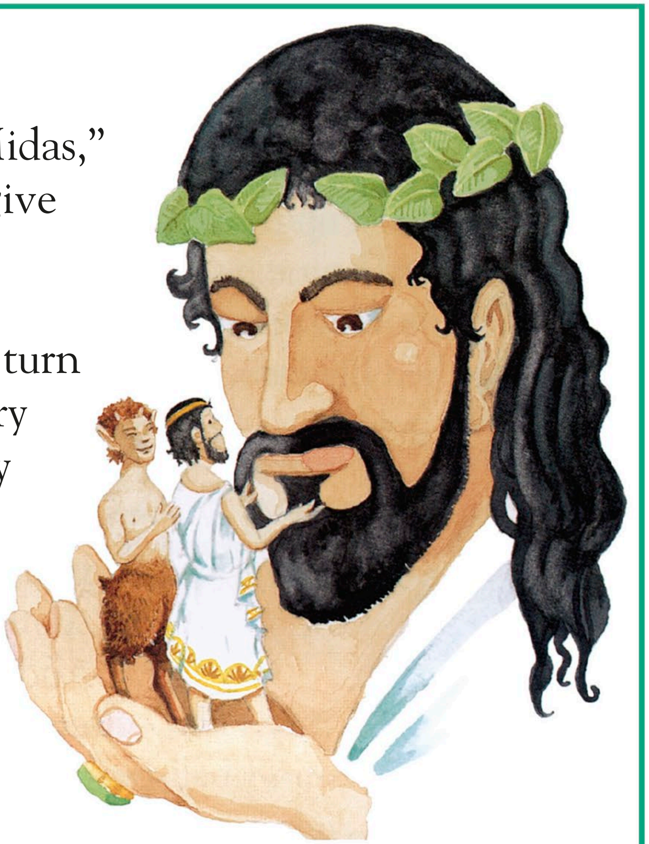
Then he said, "I must go back to my master. Dionysus will be wondering where I am."

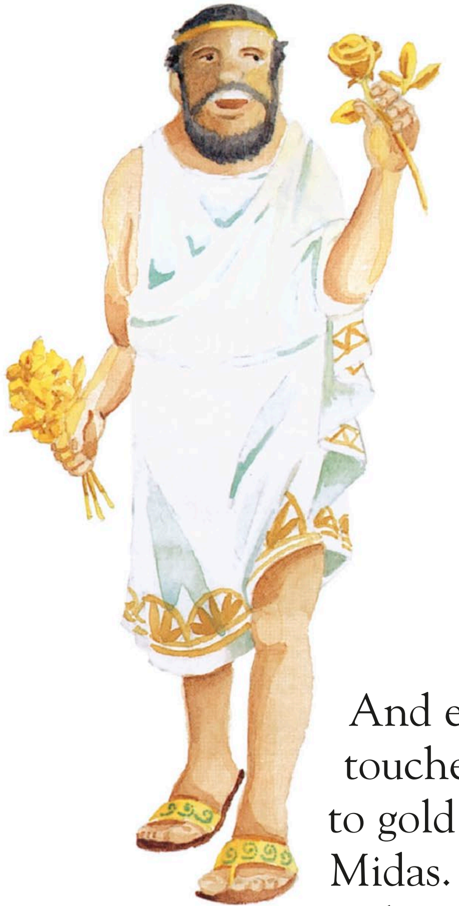


So Midas took Silenus back to the god Dionysus, who was very pleased to see him.

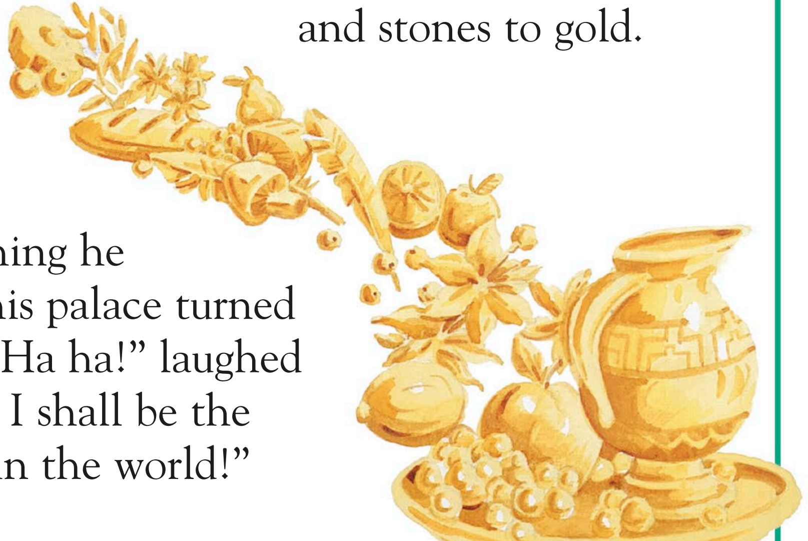
“You have looked after him well, Midas,” said the god. “What present can I give you to say thank you?”

“I would like everything I touch to turn to gold,” said Midas. “Then in a very short time, I will be rich beyond my wildest dreams.”



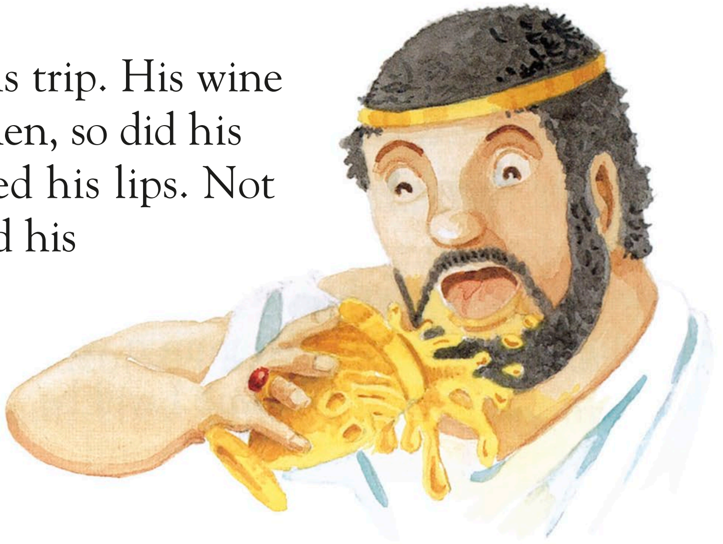


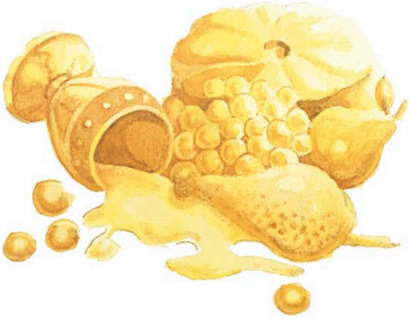
Dionysus granted his wish. As Midas walked home, he had so much fun turning flowers and stones to gold.



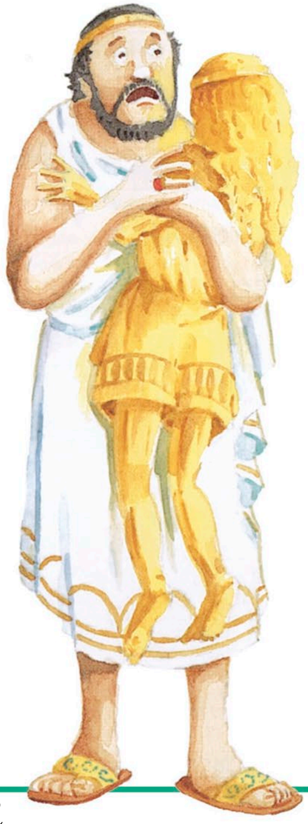
And everything he touched in his palace turned to gold too! “Ha ha!” laughed Midas. “Now I shall be the richest man in the world!”

Midas was thirsty after his trip. His wine cup turned to gold, but then, so did his wine as soon as it touched his lips. Not one drop of liquid reached his throat. It was solid gold.

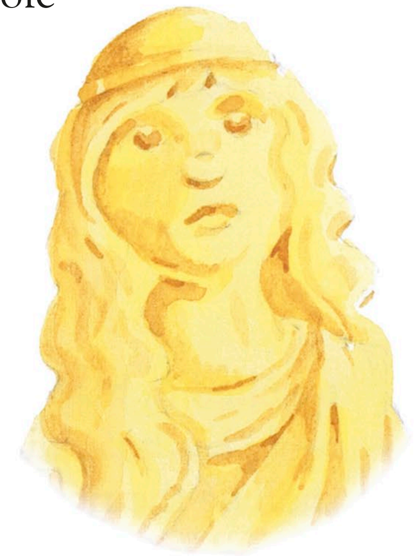




And he couldn't eat his dinner because everything—bread, meat, olives, grapes—every morsel turned into gold the moment Midas picked it up.



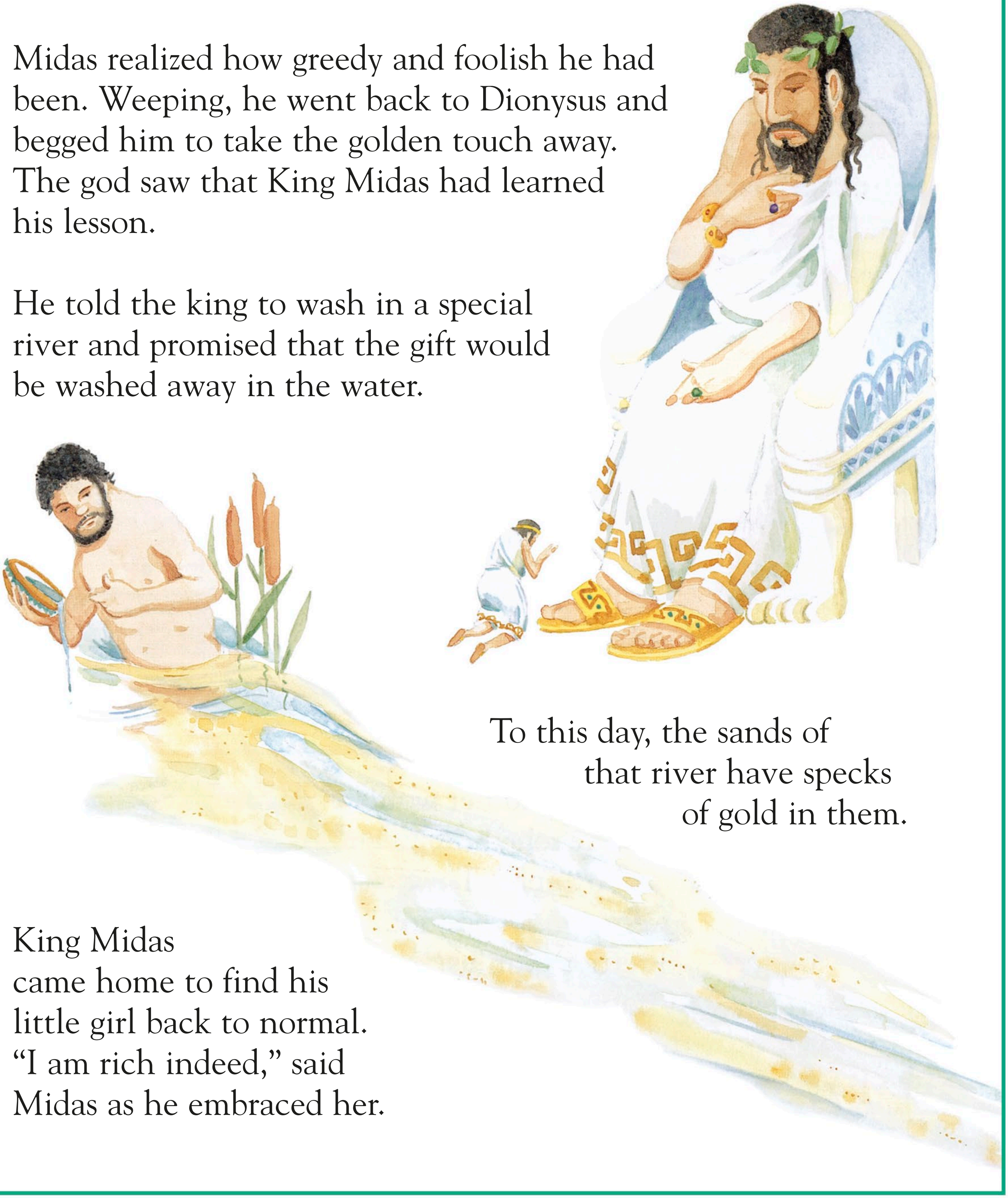
Now, King Midas had a little daughter, his favorite person in the whole world. She came running to greet him.



"Daddy, I'm so glad you're home," she cried and before Midas could stop her, she rushed into his arms. Instantly, she became a gold statue of a little girl.

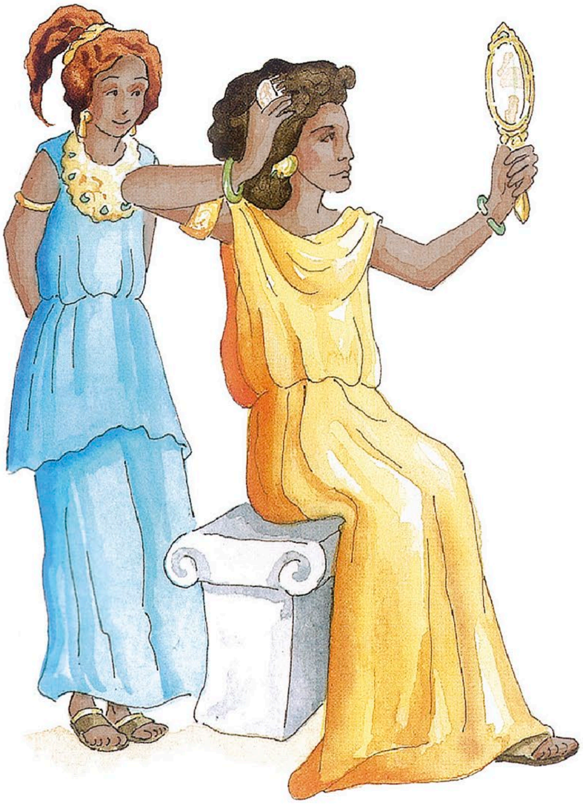
Midas realized how greedy and foolish he had been. Weeping, he went back to Dionysus and begged him to take the golden touch away. The god saw that King Midas had learned his lesson.

He told the king to wash in a special river and promised that the gift would be washed away in the water.



To this day, the sands of that river have specks of gold in them.

King Midas came home to find his little girl back to normal. "I am rich indeed," said Midas as he embraced her.

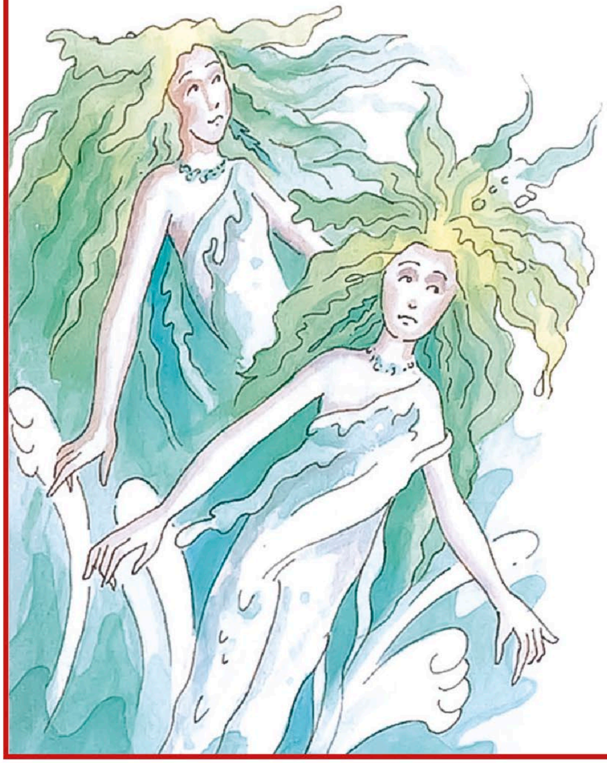


Andromeda

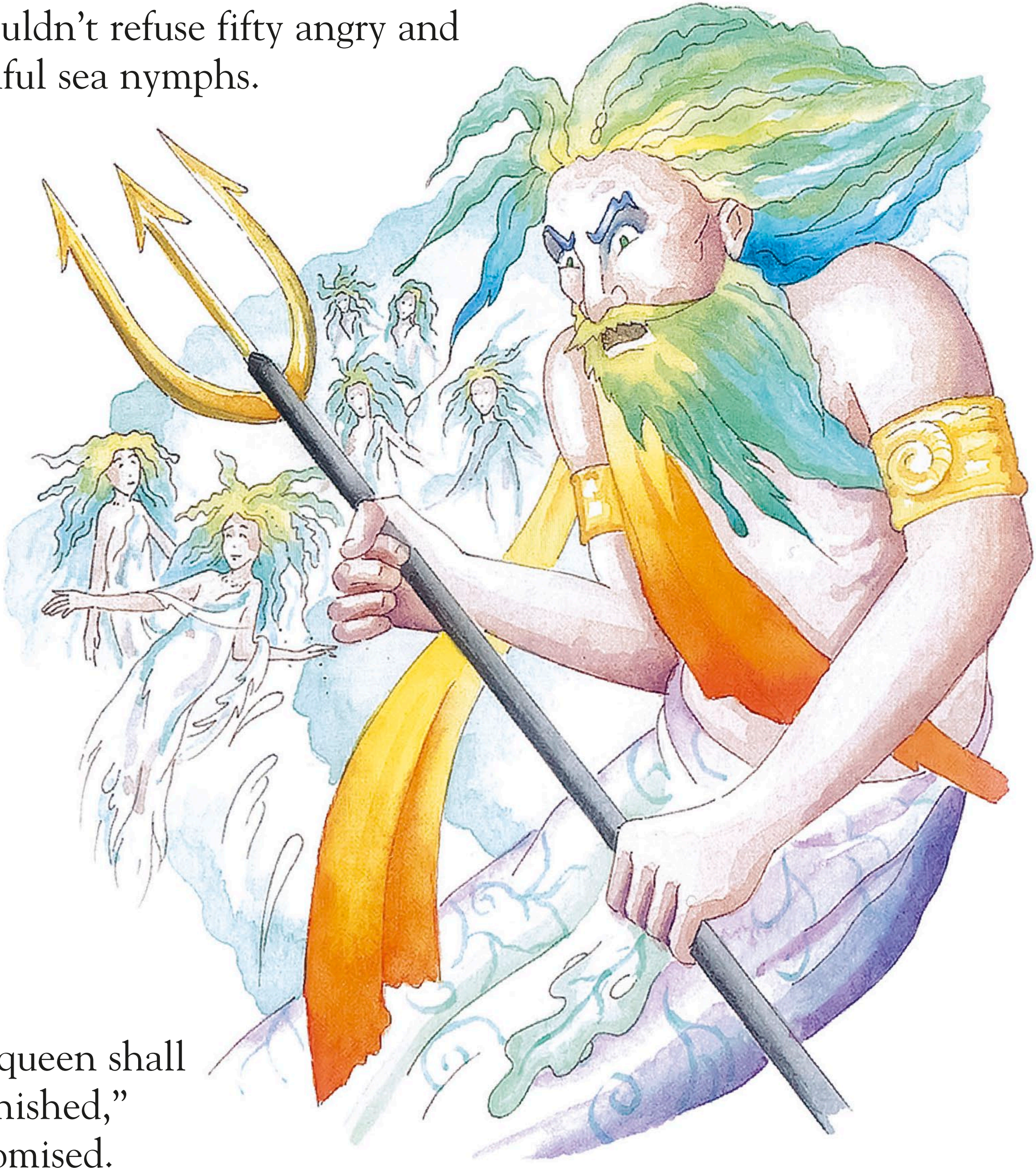
In Ethiopia, there was a queen called Cassiopeia. She was very beautiful and she had an equally beautiful daughter, named Andromeda.

"My darling," said the queen. "Just look at us! We are so lovely that I think we must be even prettier than the sea nymphs."

The queen's palace was on the coast and her words soon reached the sea nymphs. They were very indignant. "Prettier than us? What nonsense!" they cried. "This mortal must be put in her place!"



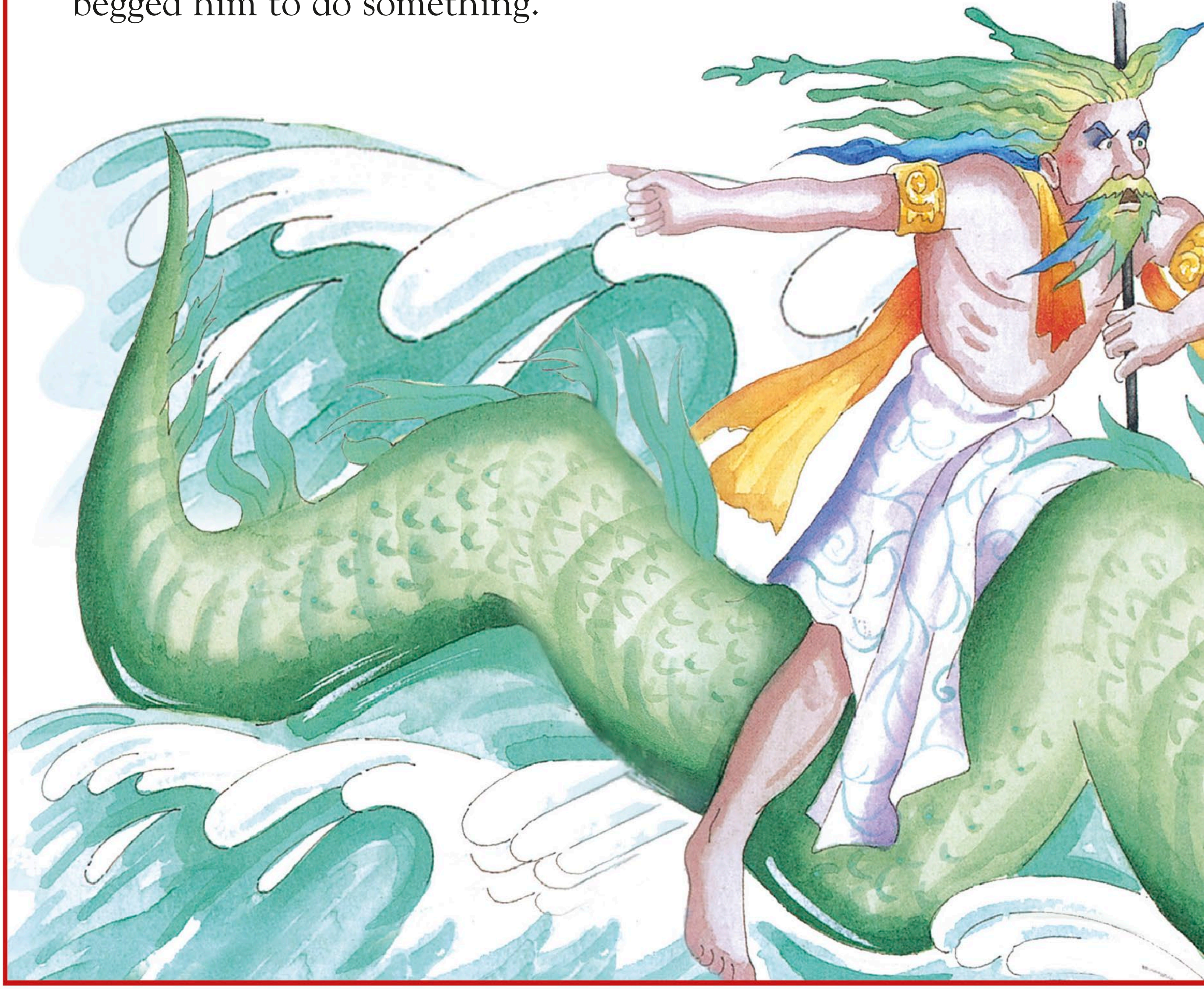
There were fifty sea nymphs, the Nereids, and they all went to complain to their protector, the mighty sea god Poseidon. He couldn't refuse fifty angry and beautiful sea nymphs.



"The queen shall
be punished,"
he promised.

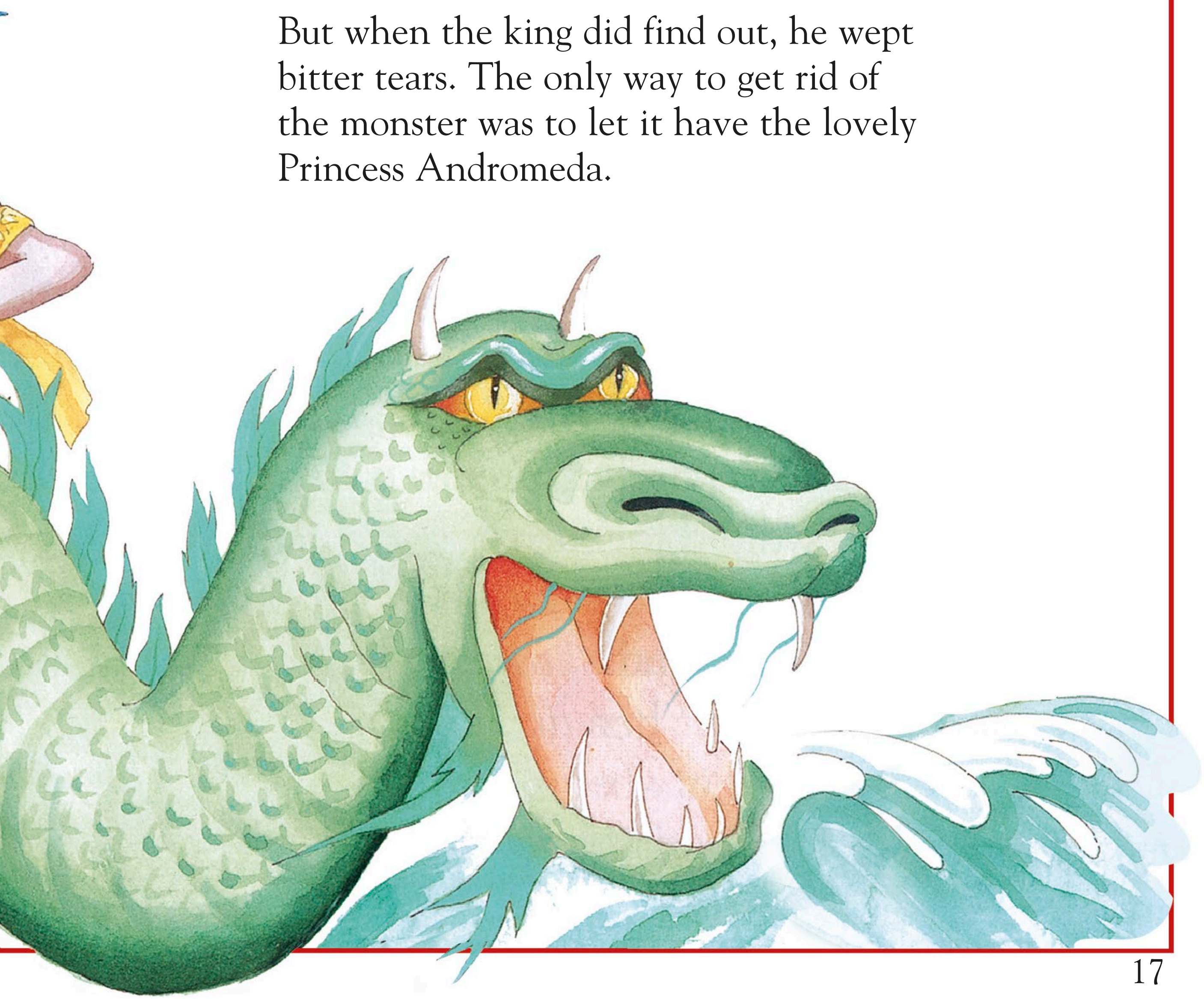
Poseidon summoned up a terrifying sea monster and sent it to the coast of Ethiopia.

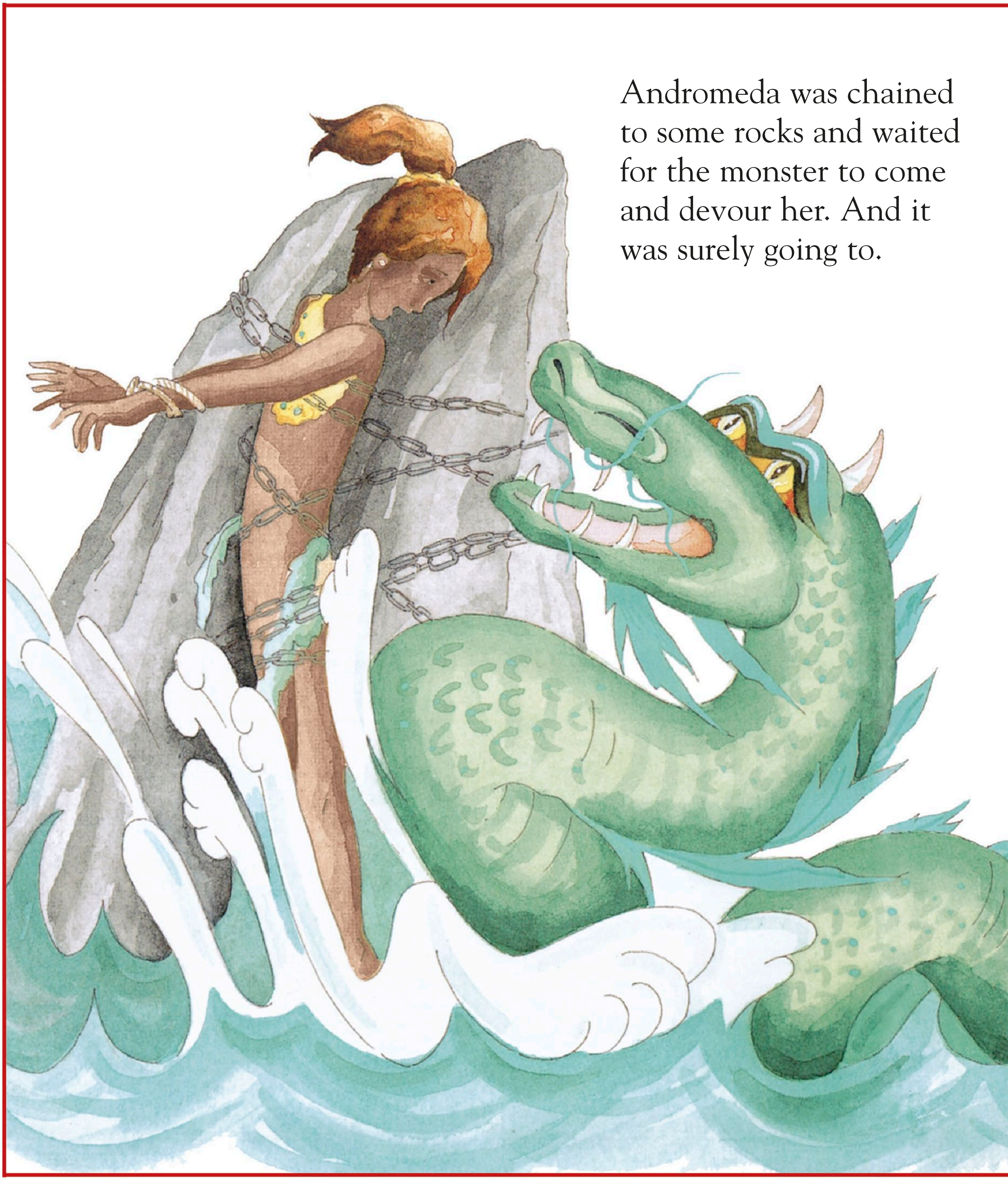
The people of Ethiopia were terrified. They couldn't fish or go out in their trading ships, because the monster sank their boats and ate the sailors. They went to King Cepheus and begged him to do something.



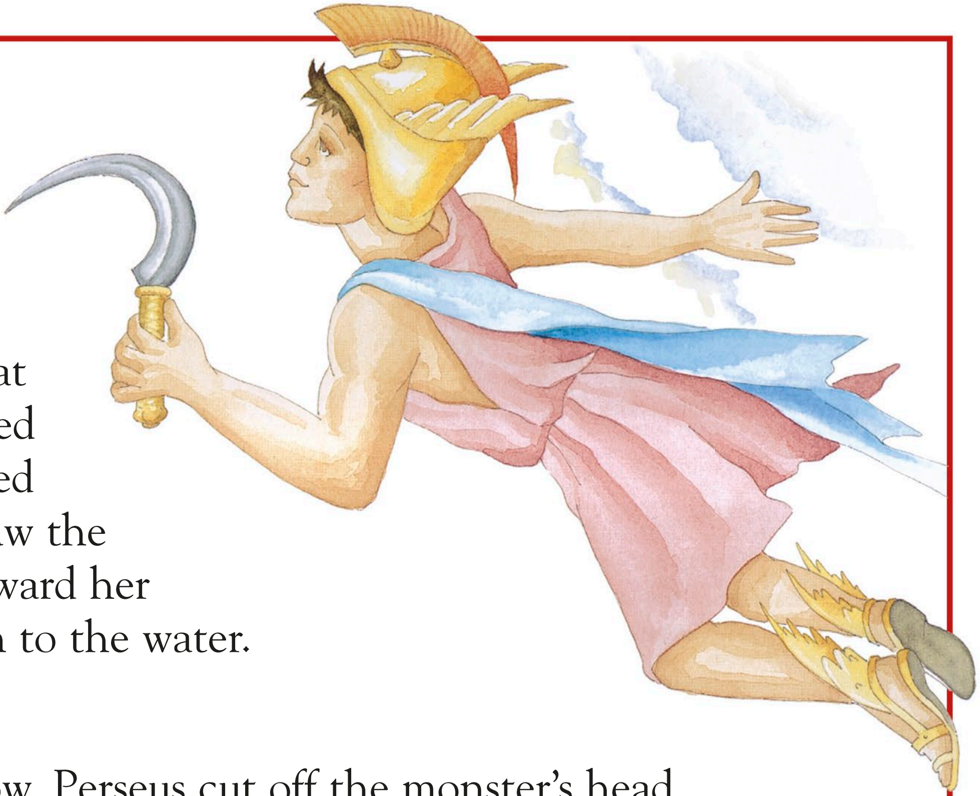
“My dear,” said the king to the queen. “This monster is a punishment for your boasting. We must find out what the gods want us to do to put things right.”

But when the king did find out, he wept bitter tears. The only way to get rid of the monster was to let it have the lovely Princess Andromeda.



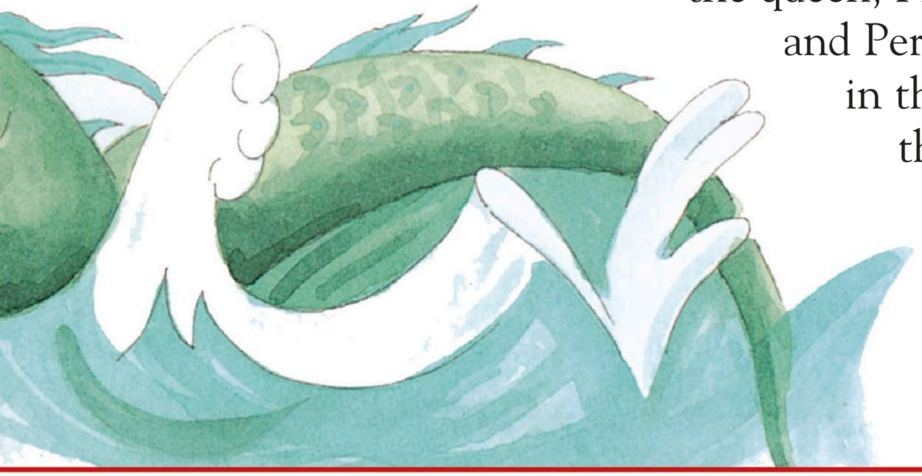


Andromeda was chained to some rocks and waited for the monster to come and devour her. And it was surely going to.



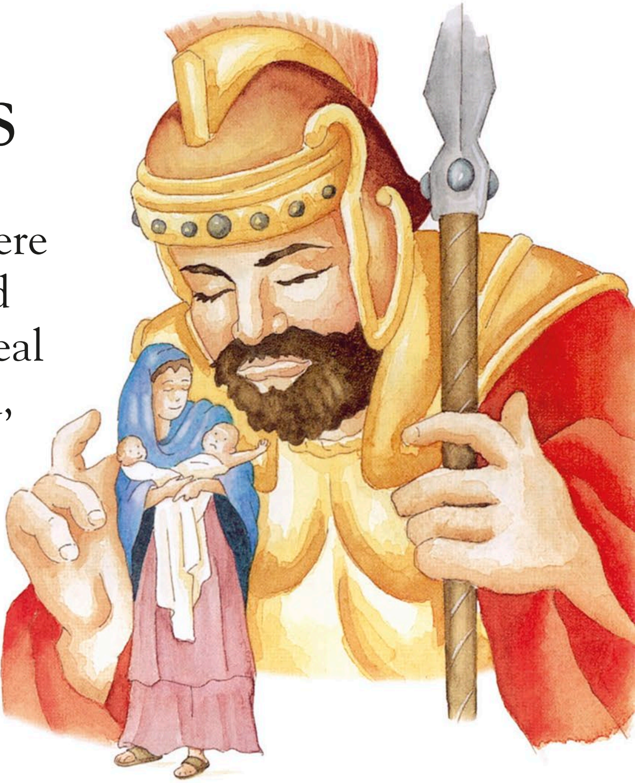
But, as luck would have it, the hero Perseus was flying past the coast of Ethiopia at just that moment. He spotted the princess chained to the rocks and saw the serpent rushing toward her and swooped down to the water.

With one swift blow, Perseus cut off the monster's head and Andromeda was saved. Perseus and Andromeda were married. The monster had given Cassiopeia such a fright that she never boasted again.



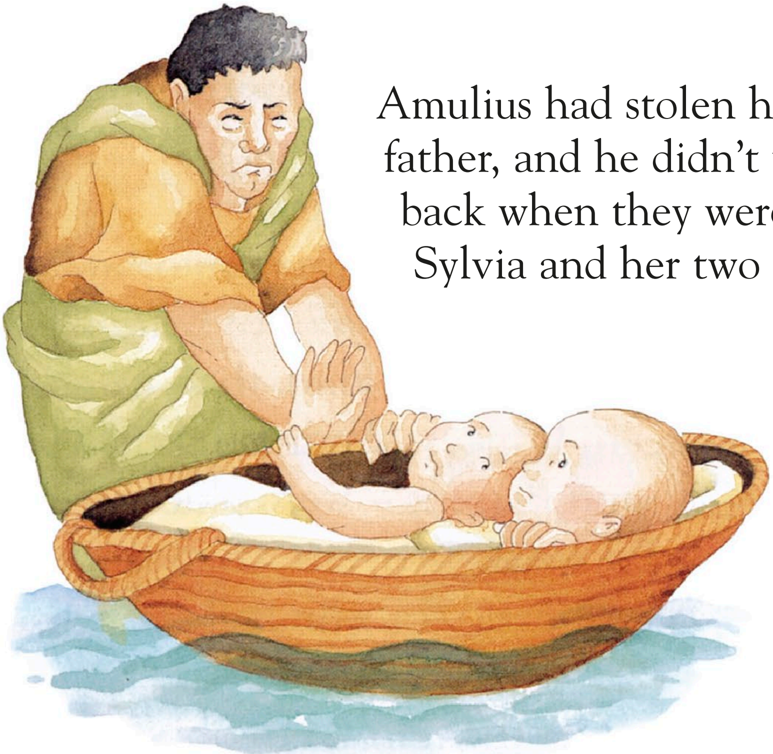
And all of them—the king, the queen, Princess Andromeda, and Perseus—were placed in the heavens when they died. You can still see the stars named after them in the night sky.

Wolf Babies



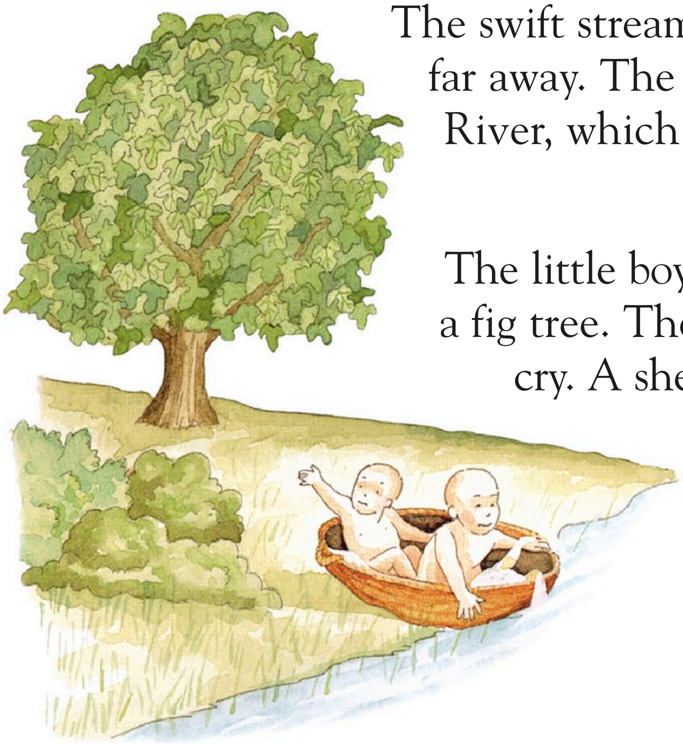
In ancient Italy, there were twin little boys who had a very strange family. Their real mother was a princess called Sylvia, and their father was Mars, the great war god.

When Sylvia gave birth to the twin boys, her uncle Amulius was furious.



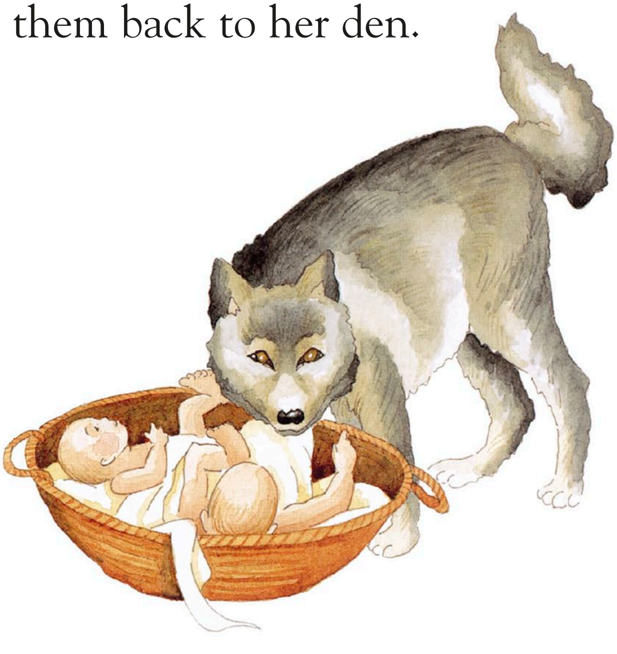
Amulius had stolen his kingdom from Sylvia's father, and he didn't want her sons to get it back when they were older. So Amulius had Sylvia and her two sons thrown into a river.

Sylvia was rescued by a river god, but the twins were swept away.

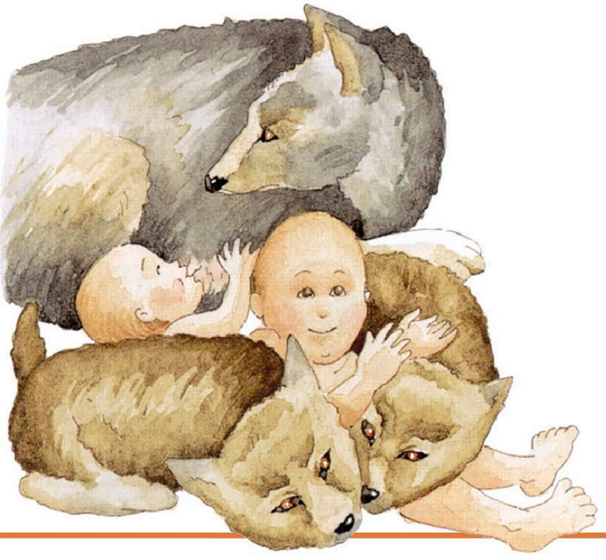


The swift stream carried the babies' cradle far away. The waters rushed into the Tiber River, which overflowed its banks.

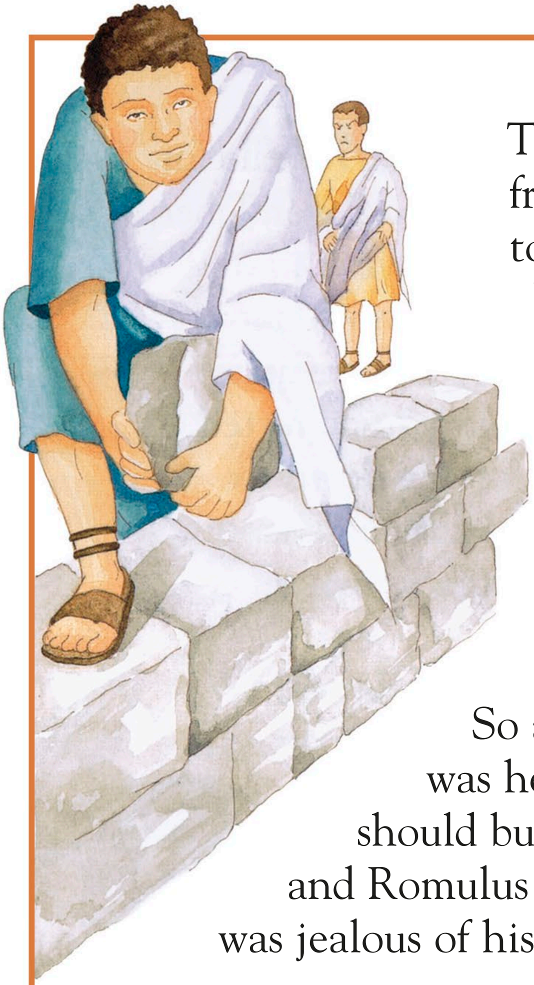
The little boys were washed ashore under a fig tree. They were hungry and started to cry. A she-wolf had come down to the water to drink. When she heard the babies crying, she lifted them gently out of their cradle and carried them back to her den.



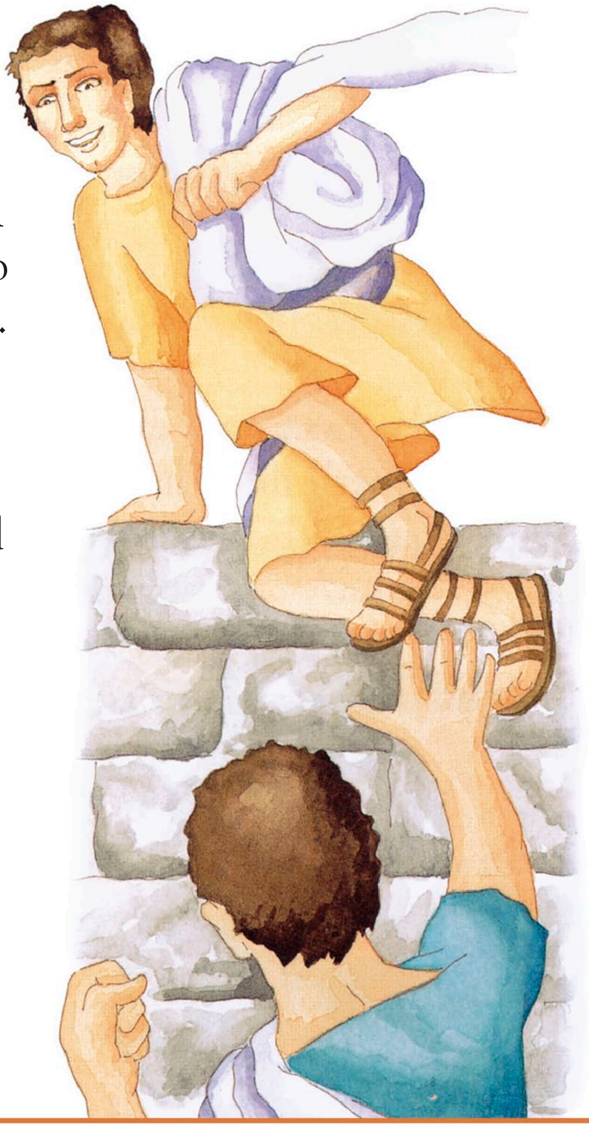
There the twin boys drank their wolf-mother's milk and grew up with wolf-brothers and sisters.



When they grew up, the two boys were adopted by shepherds who called them Romulus and Remus.



The twins found out that they came from a king’s family and both wanted to build a city on the banks of the Tiber River. But they couldn’t agree on the right place to start building. Romulus wanted one hill and Remus preferred another.

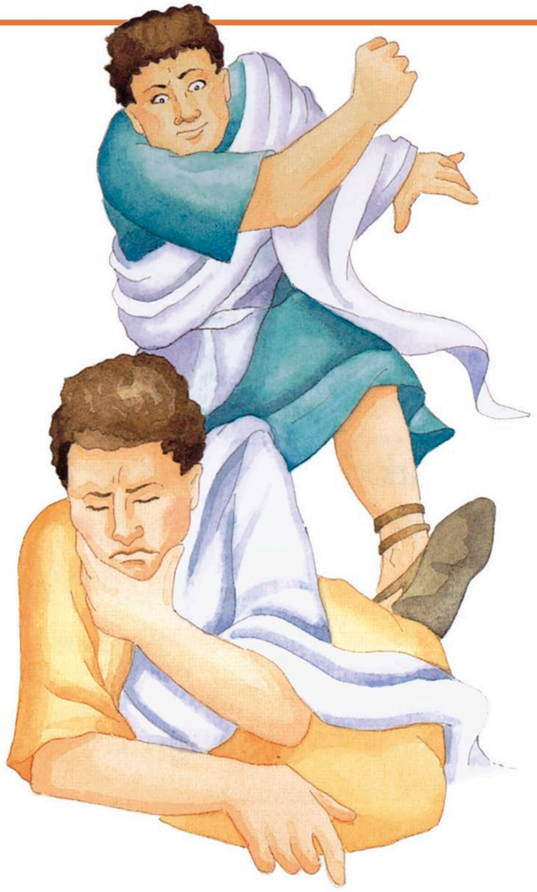


So a competition was held to see who should build the city … and Romulus won. Remus was jealous of his brother.

He waited until Romulus had started to build the wall of his city …

… then he jumped over it.

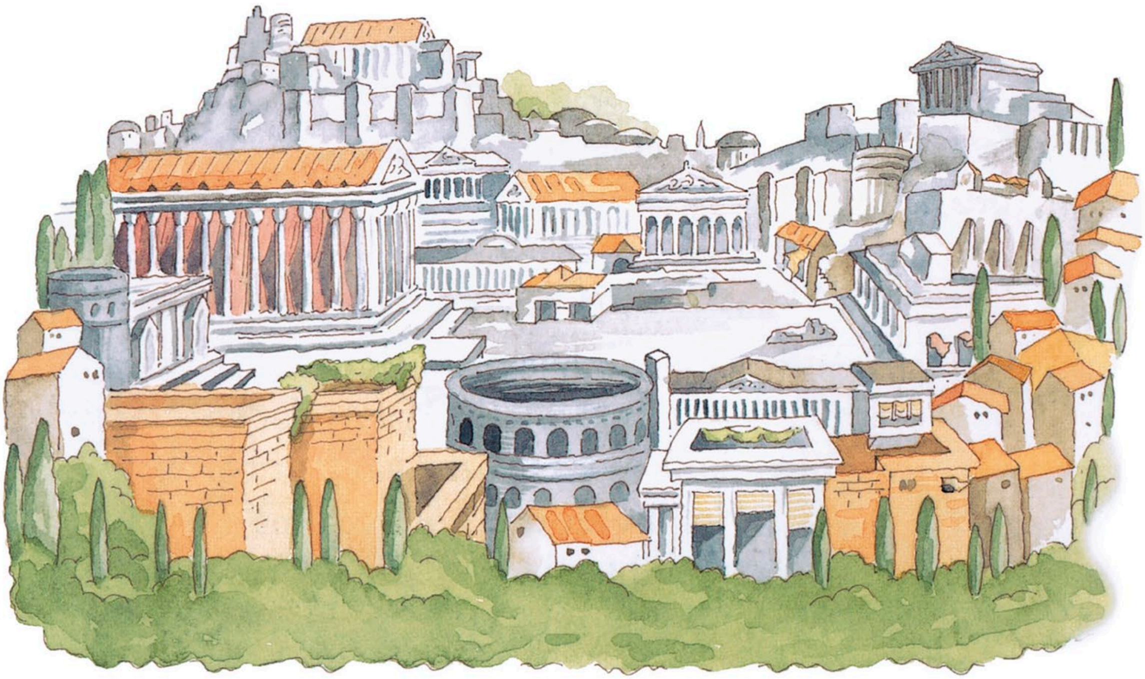
“Hey, Romulus!” he said. “It’s going to be really easy to invade your city! So much for your defenses!”



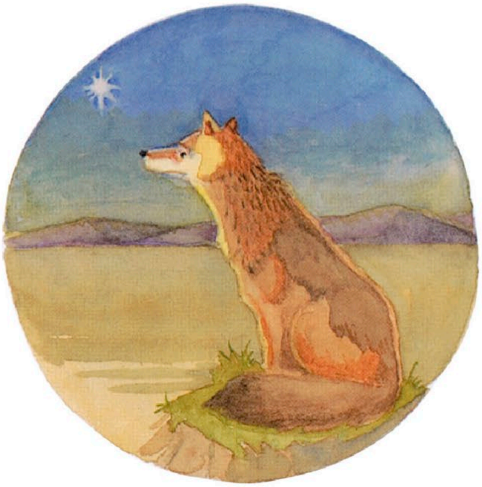
Romulus was furious with Remus for making fun of him. He knocked him to the ground and the two brothers had the most tremendous fight—which Romulus won.

“My city is going to be the most beautiful the world has ever seen,” he panted. “And the strongest!”

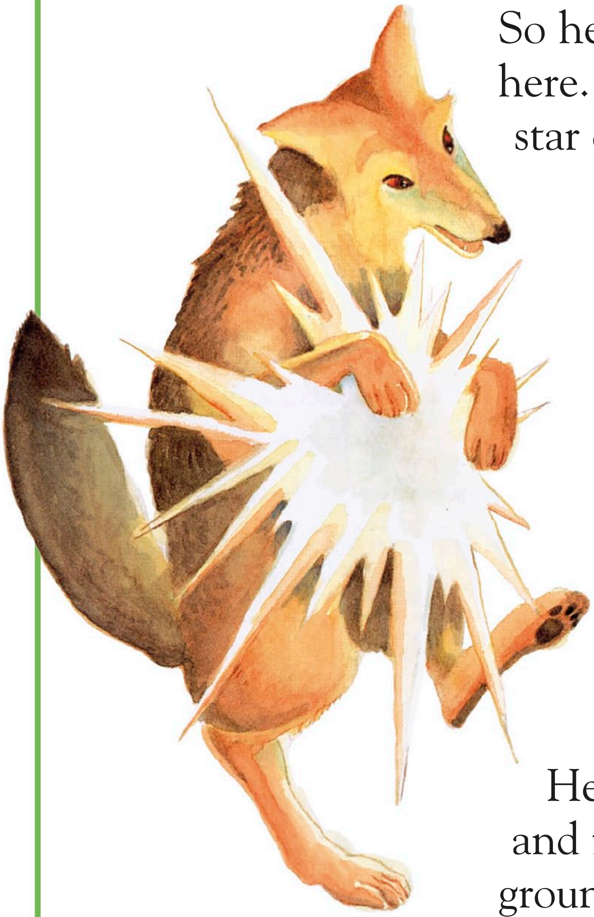
And Romulus was right. The city he built was called Rome. And you can still visit it today.



Coyote Dances with a Star



Coyote was very full of himself. He thought he could do anything he liked. One day, he got it into his head that he would like to dance with a star.

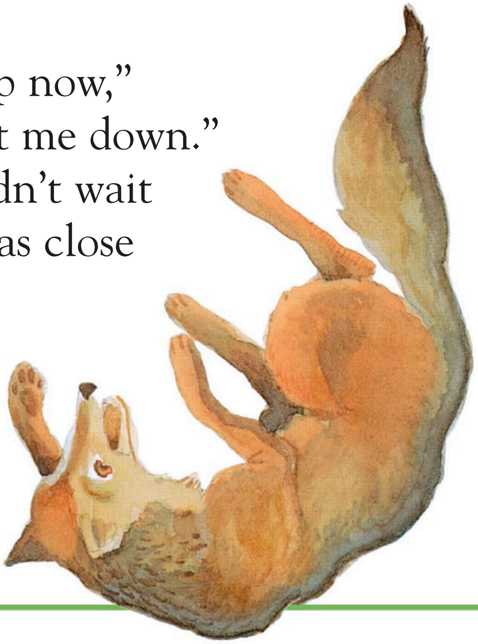


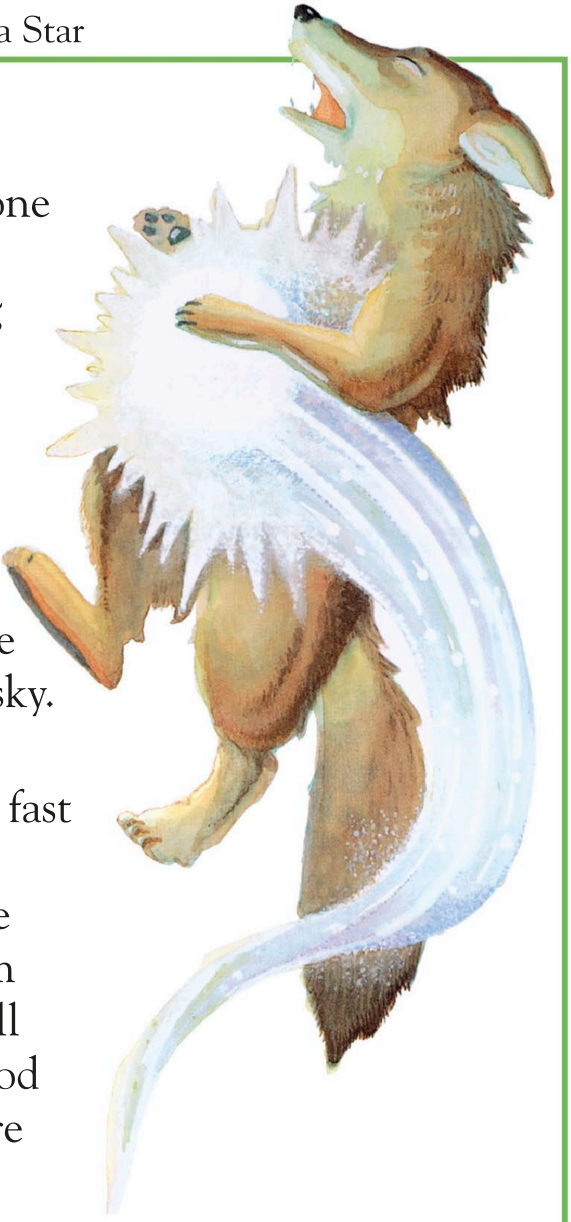
So he called to a star, "Hey, come down here. I want to dance with you!" And the star descended gracefully through the sky.

They danced and danced till Coyote's legs were tired and his arms ached from hanging onto the star.

"I want to stop now," he said. "Put me down." But he wouldn't wait till the star was close to the earth.

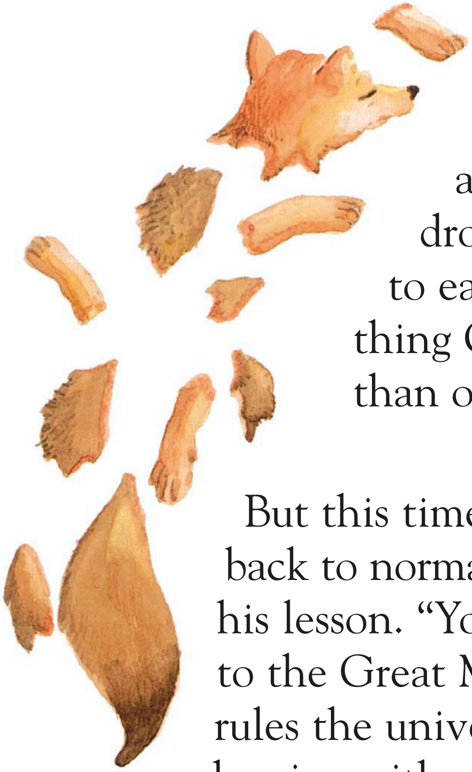
He just let go and fell to the ground—splat!





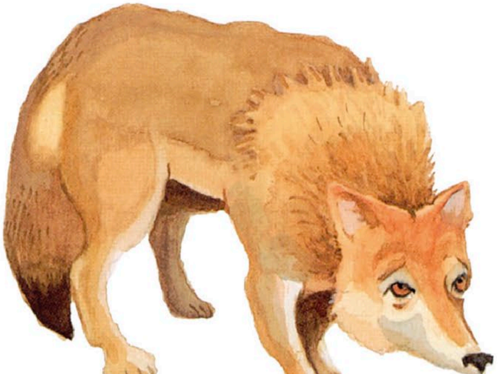
Luckily for Coyote, he had more than one life. It took a while, but one day he was back to normal. And he started looking at stars again. There was one near his lodge, with a beautiful long tail.

“Hey, come down and dance with me,” said Coyote. And the star descended. Coyote grabbed hold of the tail, and the star was off again, whirling through the sky.



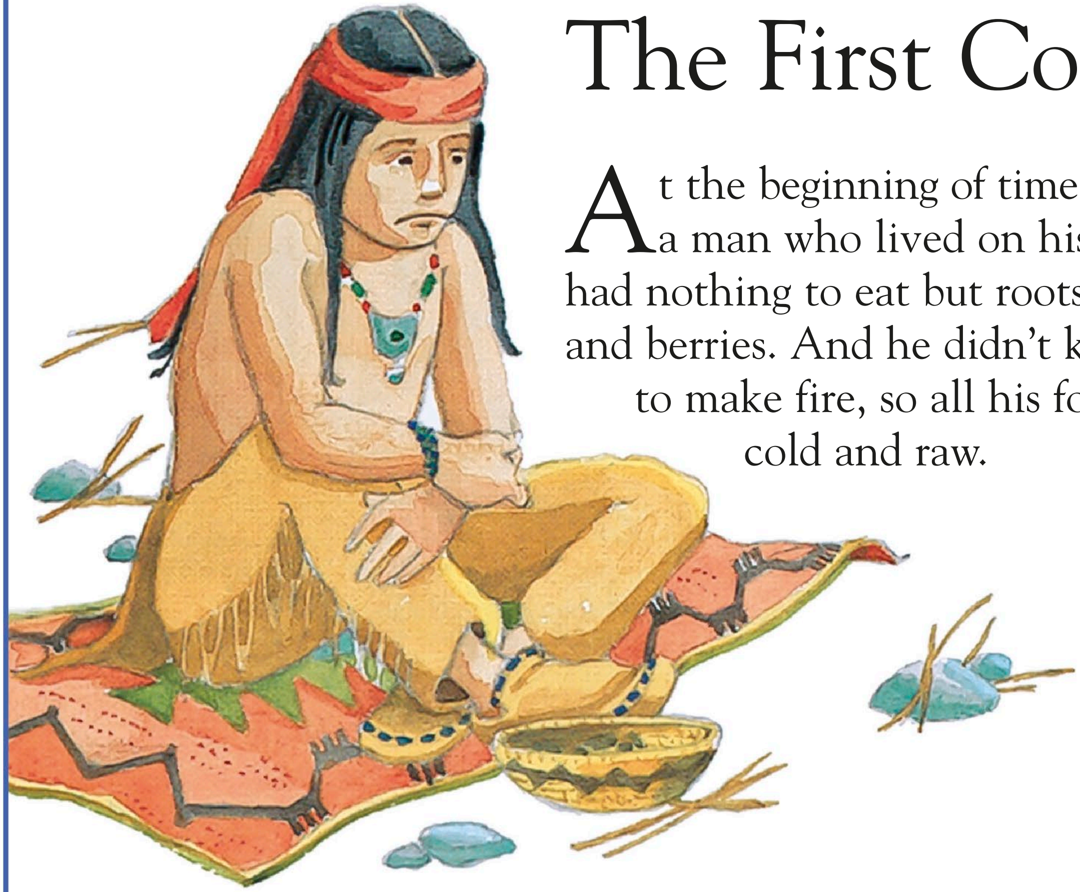
But it went so fast that Coyote started to come apart. Bits of him dropped off and fell to earth. It was a good thing Coyote had more than one life!

But this time, when he got back to normal, he had learned his lesson. “You win,” he said to the Great Mystery that rules the universe. “No more dancing with stars.”

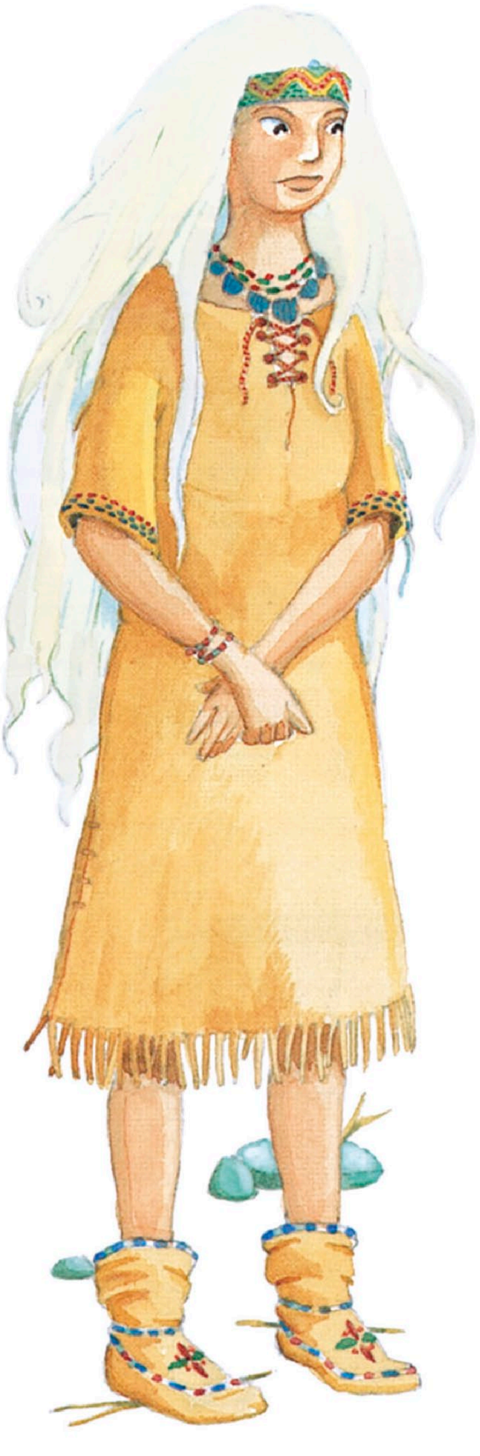


The First Corn

At the beginning of time, there was a man who lived on his own. He had nothing to eat but roots and nuts and berries. And he didn't know how to make fire, so all his food was cold and raw.

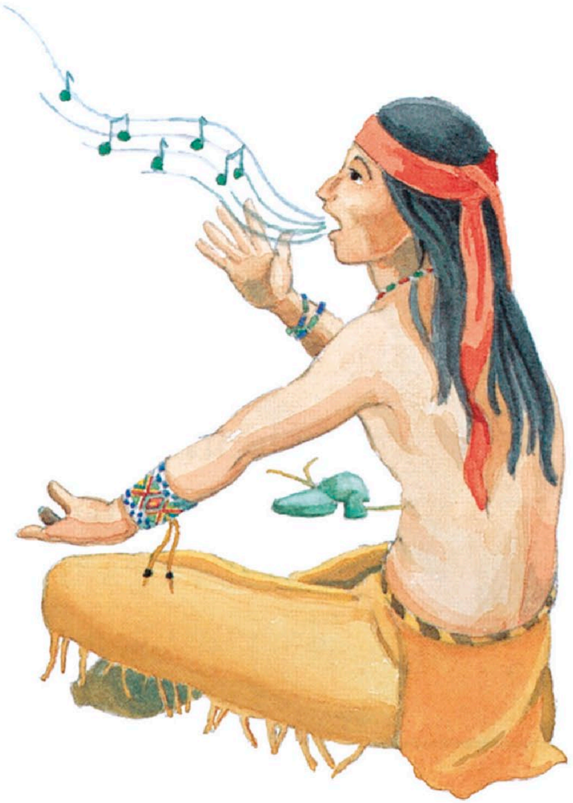


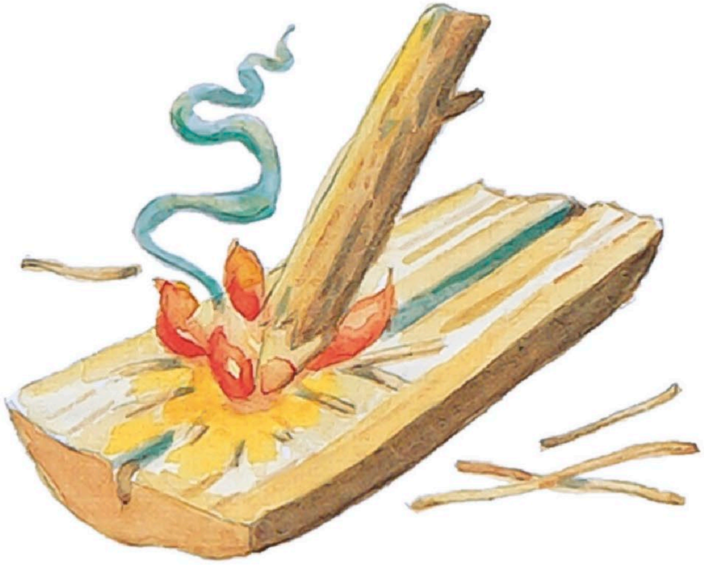
The man was very sad and lonely. He curled up in the sunshine and slept the days away.



When he woke up, he saw a beautiful woman with long, blond hair, quite unlike his own. At first he was afraid.

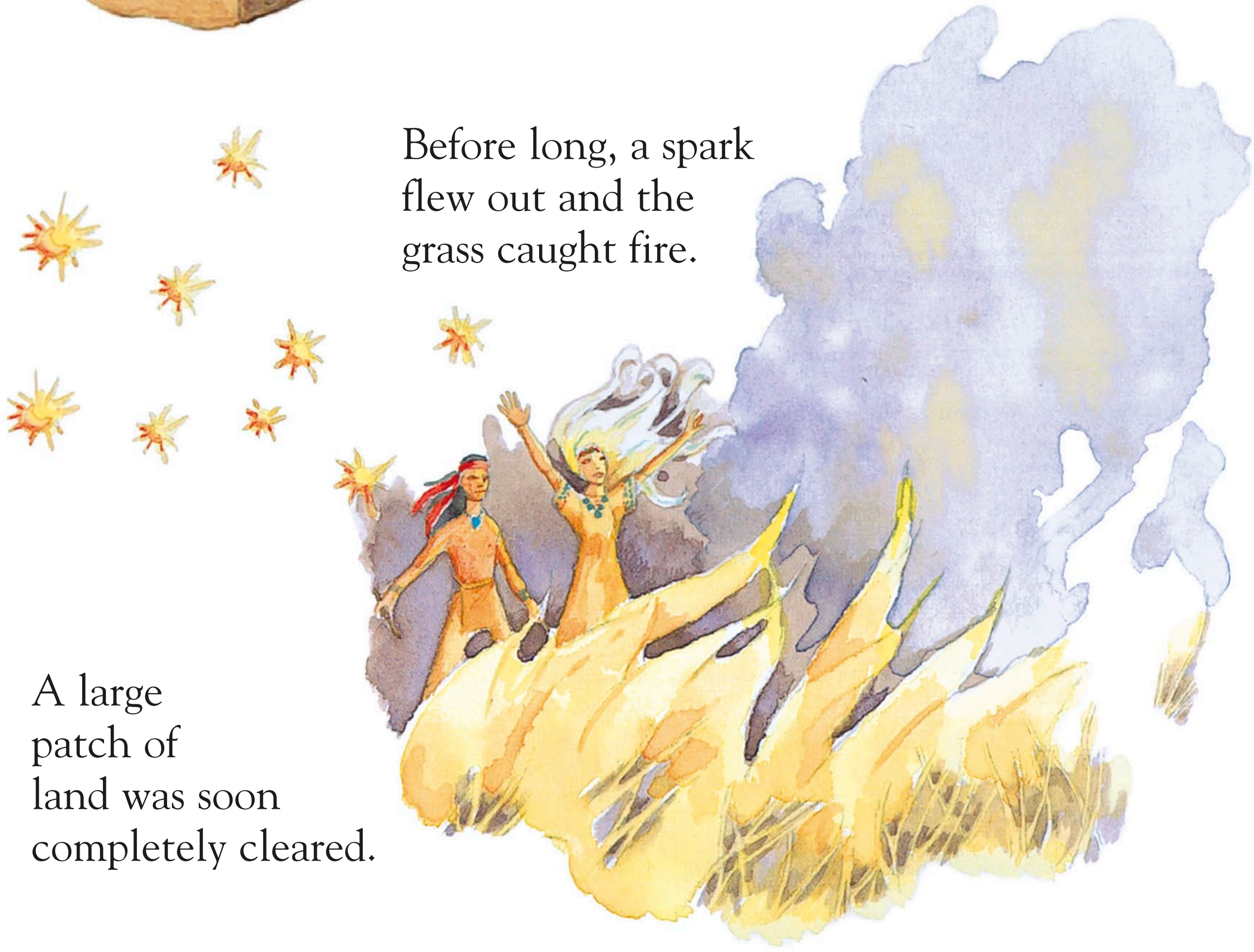
But then he thought he didn't need to be be lonely any more. He sang to the woman about how sad he was on his own. "Stay with me," he begged. "Do as I say and I will be with you forever," the woman replied.



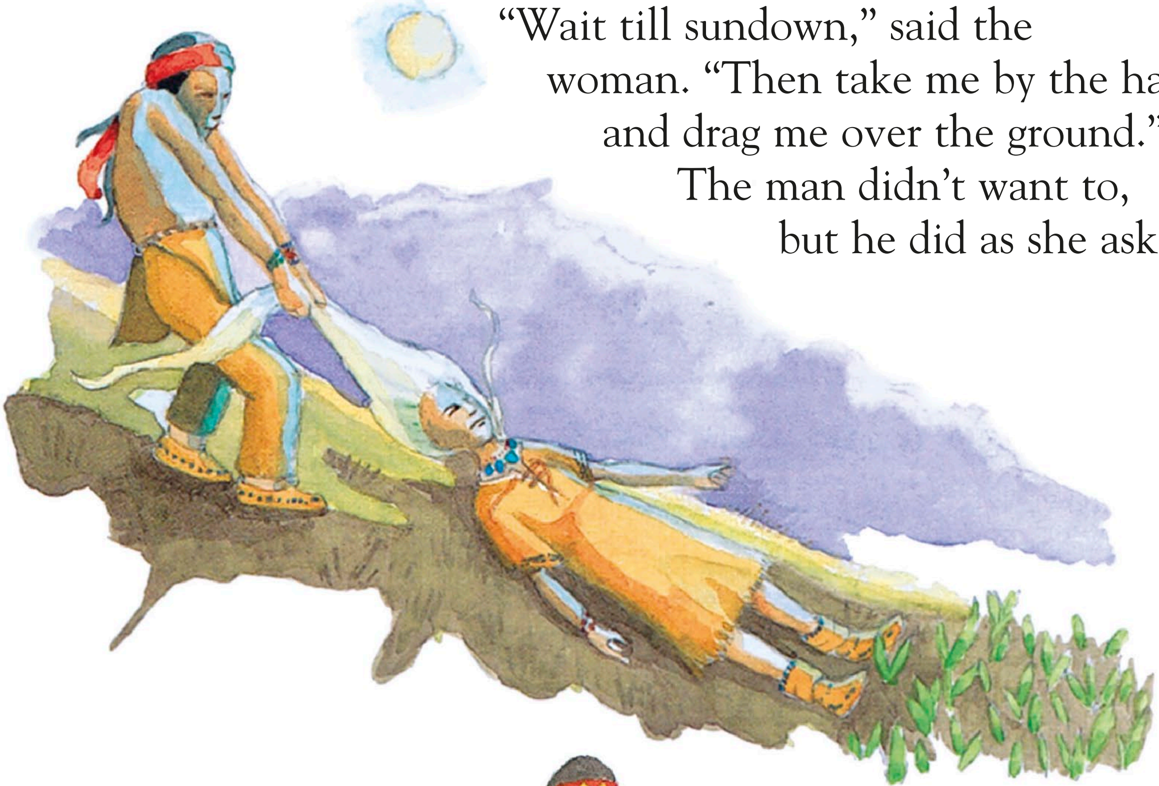


She led him to some dry grass and showed him how to start a fire by rubbing two sticks together.

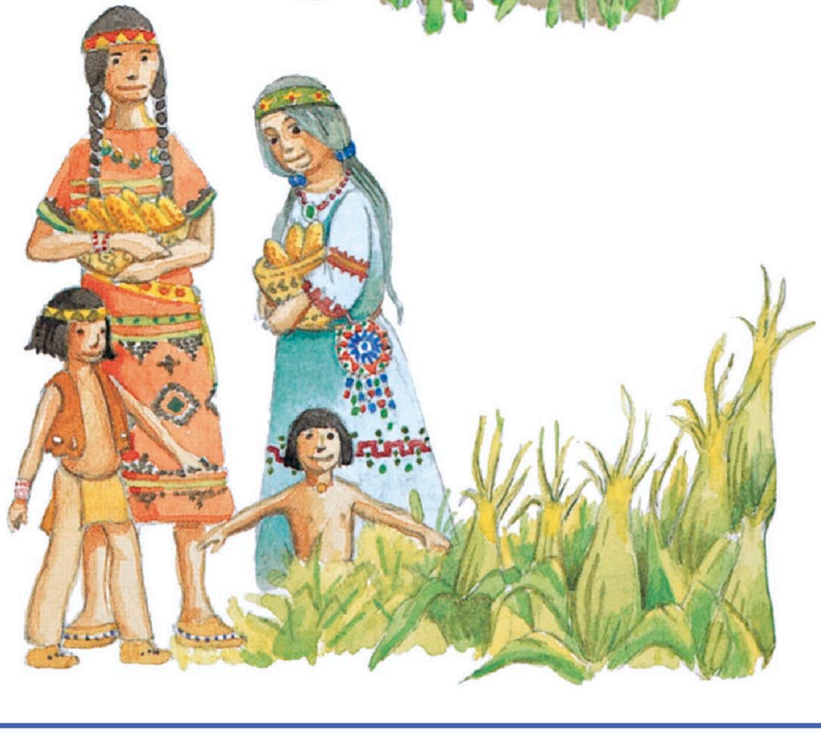
Before long, a spark flew out and the grass caught fire.



A large patch of land was soon completely cleared.



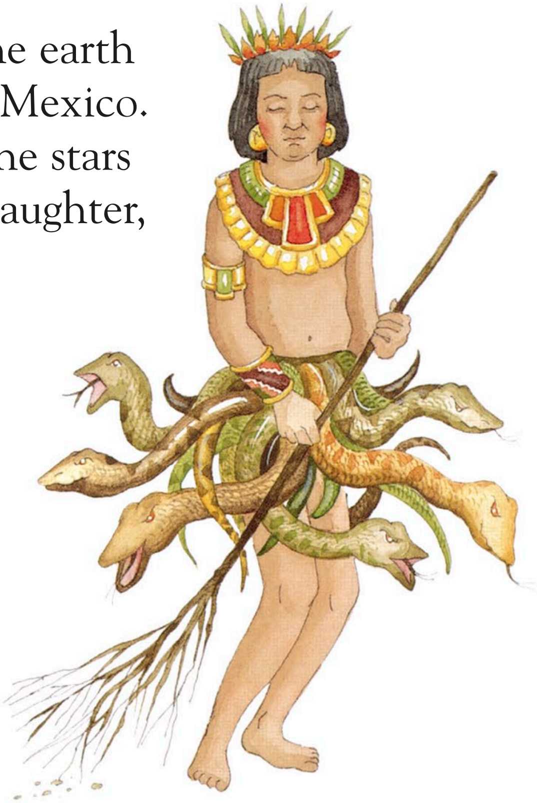
“Wait till sundown,” said the
woman. “Then take me by the hair
and drag me over the ground.”
The man didn’t want to,
but he did as she asked.



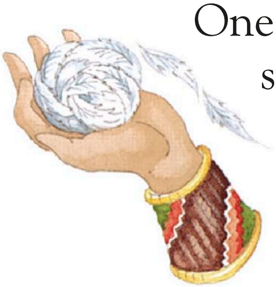
“In the spring,
there will be plants
wherever you dragged
me,” she said.

“And you will see
my hair spilling out
between the leaves.”

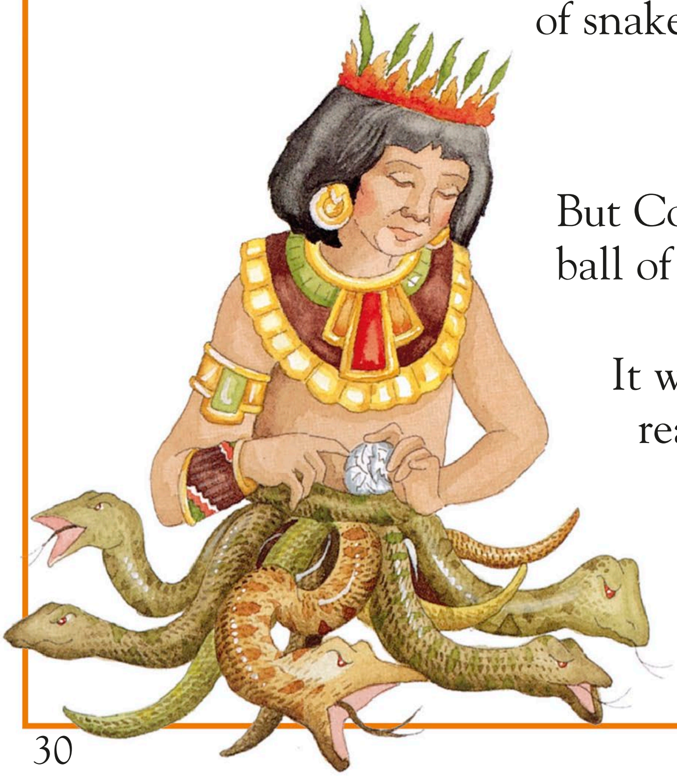
A Newborn Warrior



Coatlicue was the earth goddess of old Mexico. She had four hundred sons, who were the stars in the southern sky. And she had one daughter, Coyolxauqui, the goddess of the night.



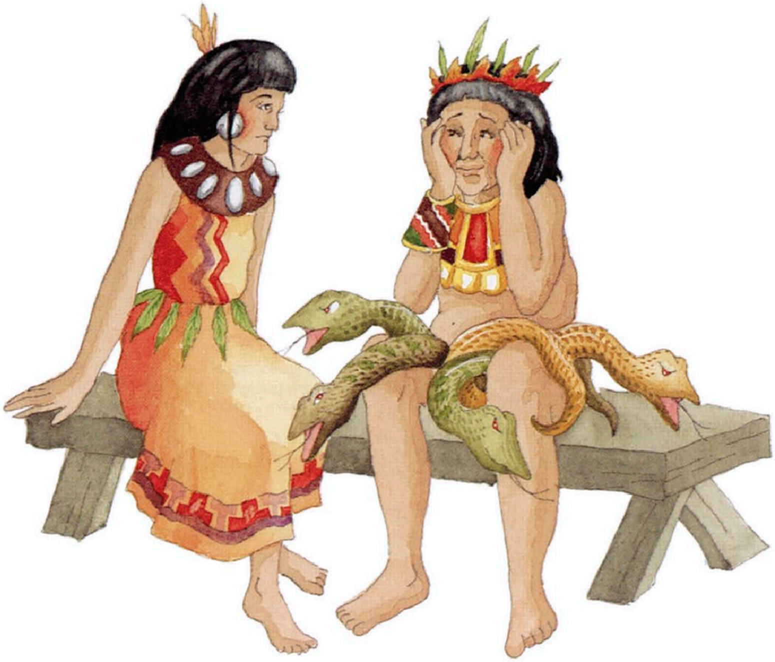
One day, when Coatlicue was sweeping the floor, she found a ball of feathers. She picked it up and tucked it tidily into the waistband of her skirt of snakes.



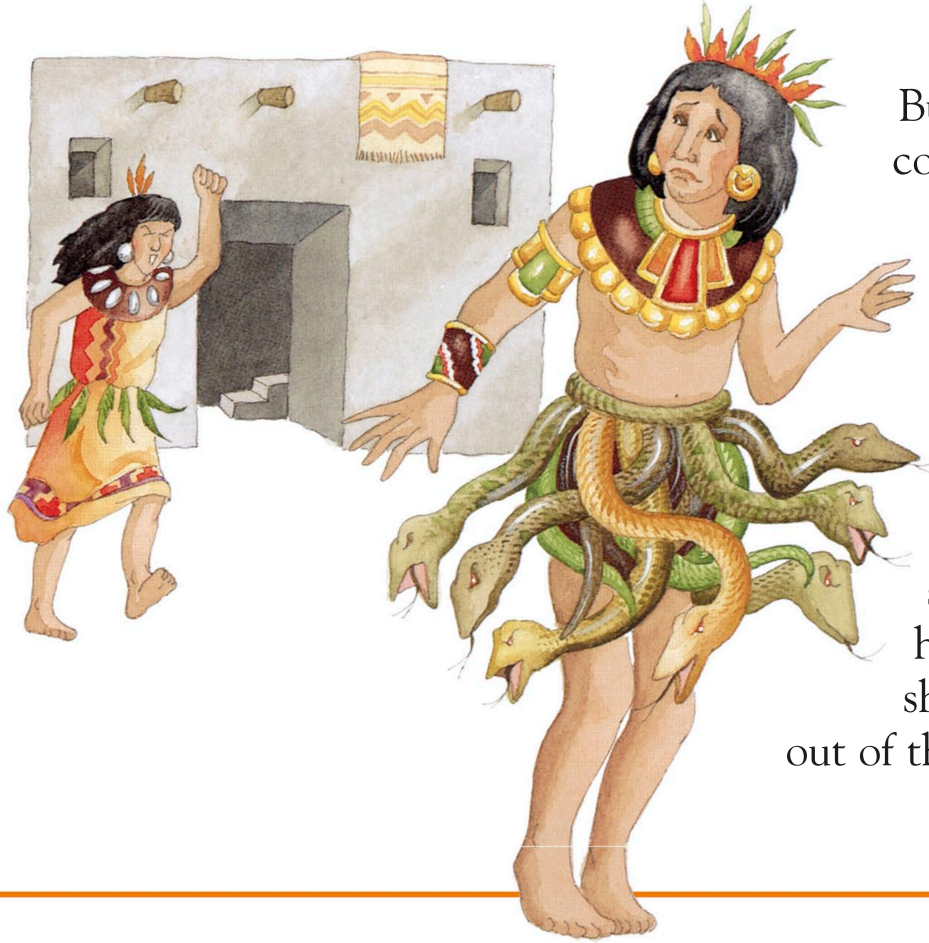
But Coatlicue didn't know that the ball of feathers held a powerful magic.

It was not long before Coatlicue realized she was expecting another baby. She had no idea that it was because of the magic ball of feathers.

When Coatlicue told her children what was happening to her, they became very angry.



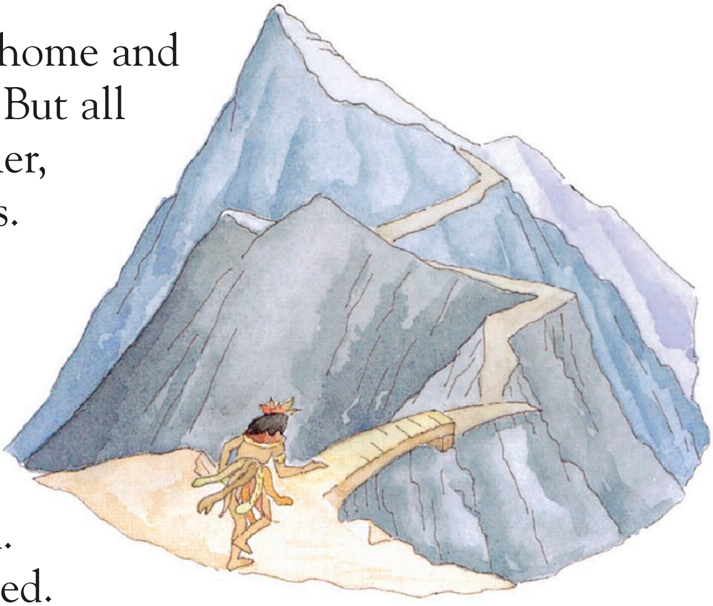
"You are too old for this sort of thing," said Coyolxauqui. "Tell us who is the father of your child."



But Coatlicue couldn't tell her because she didn't know. All her sons were angry with her, too.

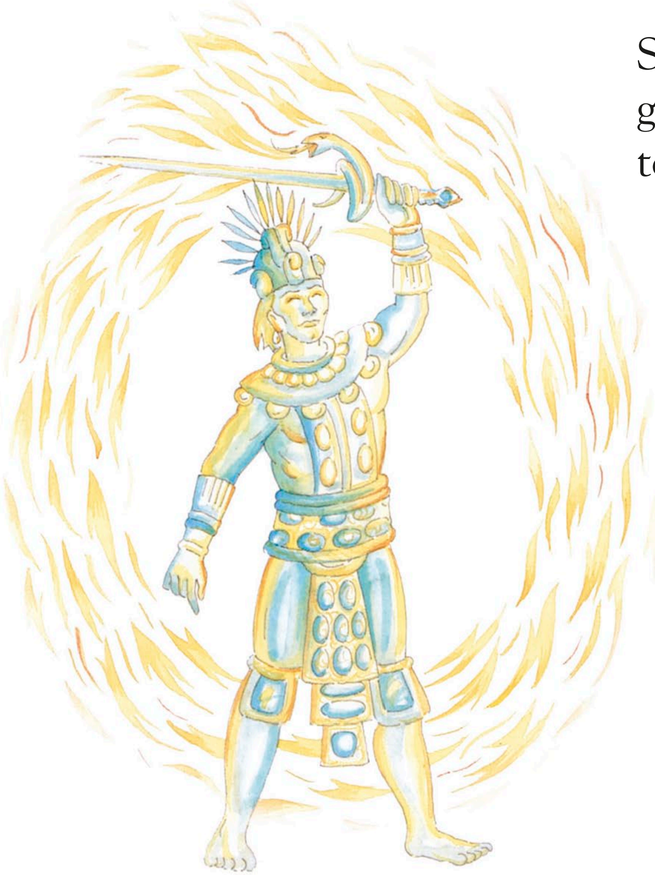
In the end, Coyolxauqui was so furious with her mother that she chased her out of the house.

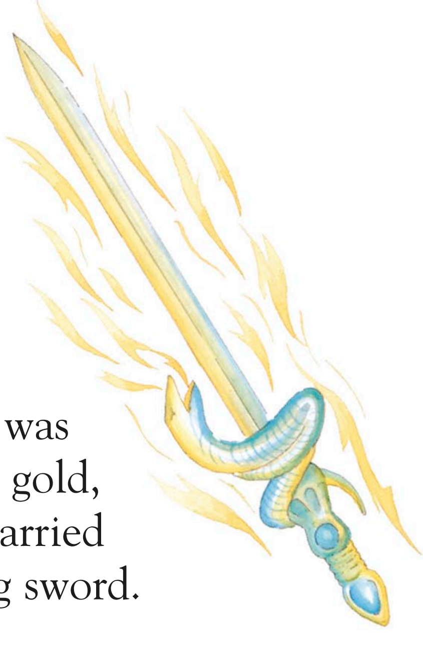
Coatlicue ran away from her home and through the mountain paths. But all her children were following her, shouting and waving weapons.



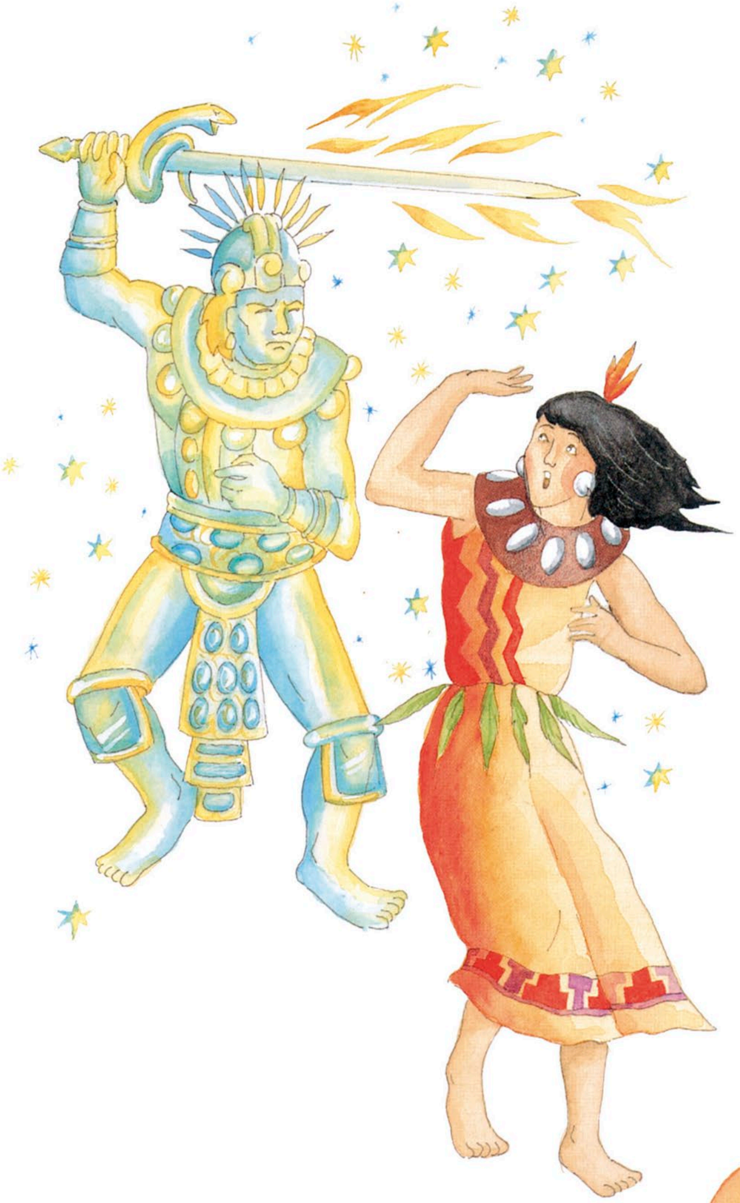
"What should I do?" moaned Coatlicue. Then things got worse, because as Coatlicue reached the top of Coatepec Mountain, she felt a bad pain. "The baby is coming," she cried.

She lay down on the ground and gave birth—not to a baby—but to a fully armed warrior.





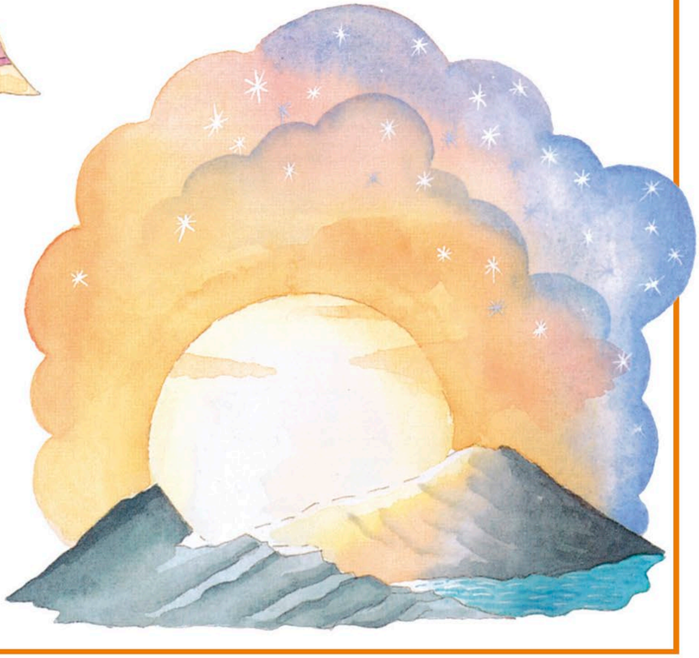
His skin was blue and gold, and he carried a flaming sword.



Huitzilopochtli was
his name, and he was,
in fact, the sun.

He leaped to his mother's
defense, because her
other children were
trying to kill her.

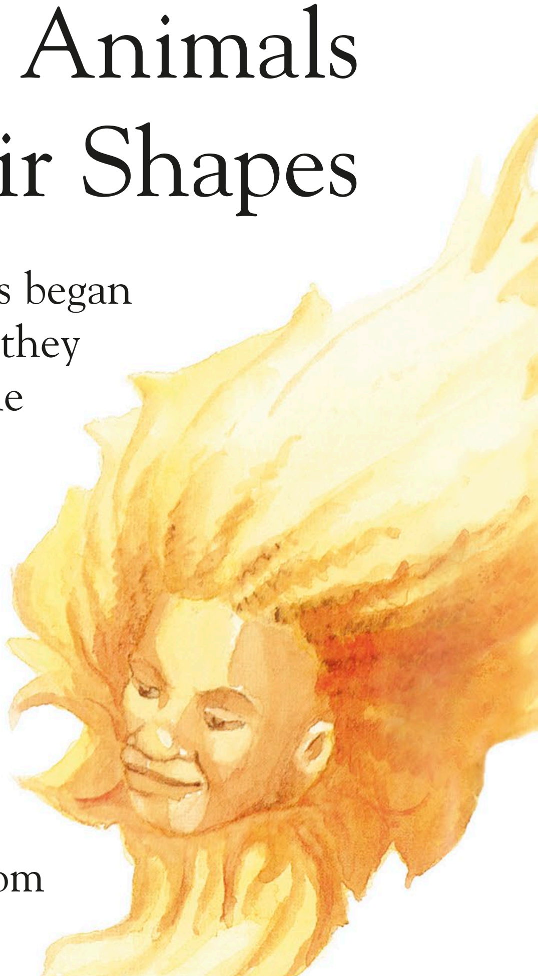
In spite of being just born,
he killed his sister, the
goddess of the night, and
most of his star brothers.



The other brothers ran
away and hid in the South.

And so it happens every
morning that the sun puts
the night and stars to flight.

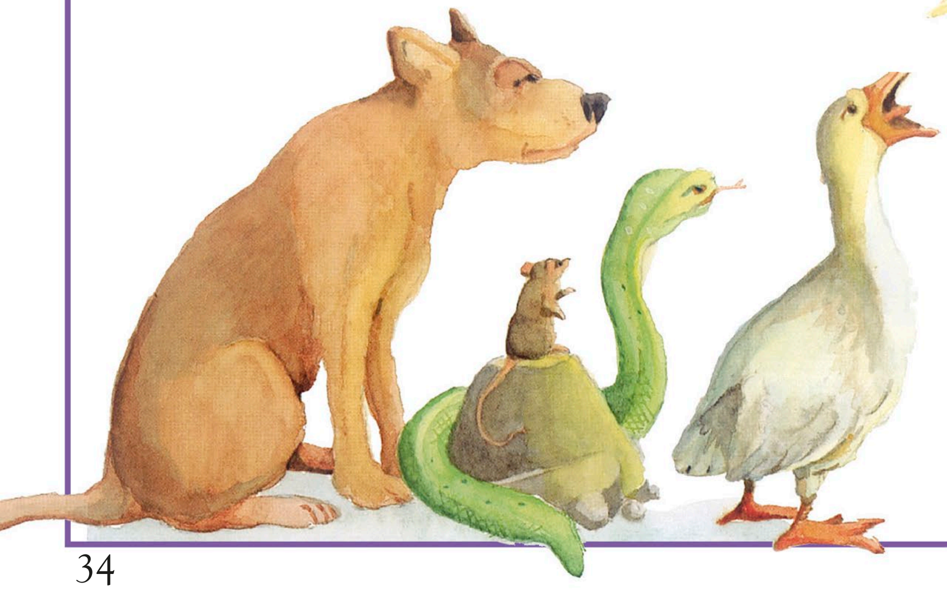
How the Animals Got Their Shapes



This is how animals began in Australia: first they were hidden in the frozen earth. Then the sun goddess Yhi warmed them into life. But they didn't like the kinds of lives they had been given.

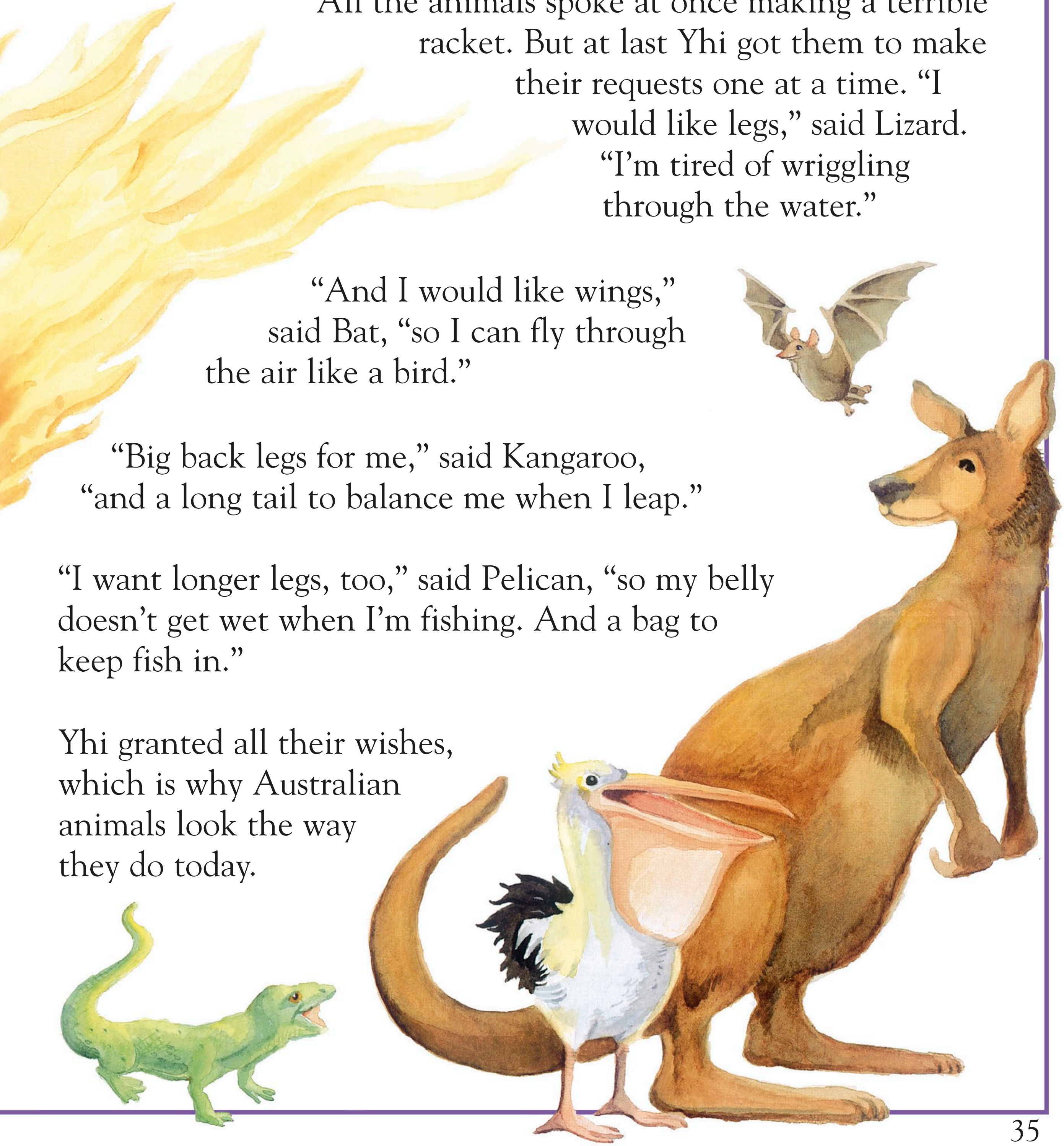
The animals that lived in the water wanted to be on land. And the ones on land wanted to be in the sky.

They grew so sad that Yhi came down from the heavens to see what was the matter.



"Now everything will be all right," they said. "Yhi will give us new shapes."

"Tell me what is wrong," said Yhi.



All the animals spoke at once making a terrible racket. But at last Yhi got them to make their requests one at a time. “I would like legs,” said Lizard. “I’m tired of wriggling through the water.”

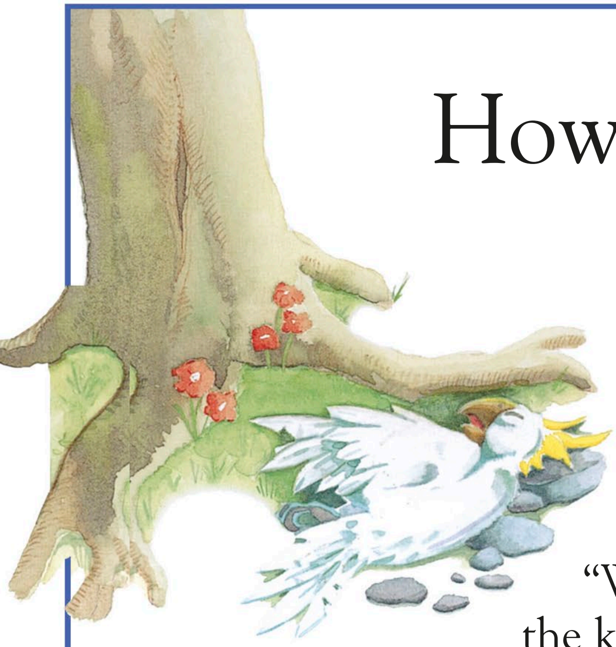
“And I would like wings,” said Bat, “so I can fly through the air like a bird.”

“Big back legs for me,” said Kangaroo, “and a long tail to balance me when I leap.”

“I want longer legs, too,” said Pelican, “so my belly doesn’t get wet when I’m fishing. And a bag to keep fish in.”

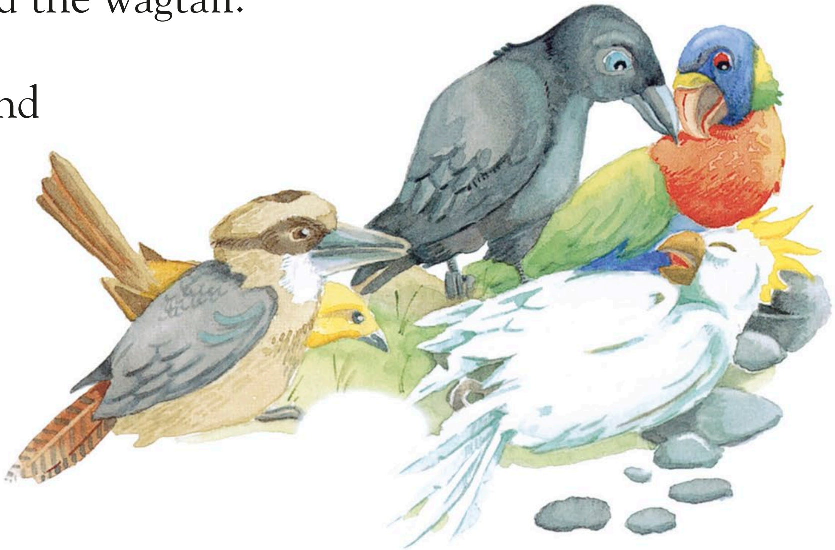
Yhi granted all their wishes, which is why Australian animals look the way they do today.

How Butterflies Began

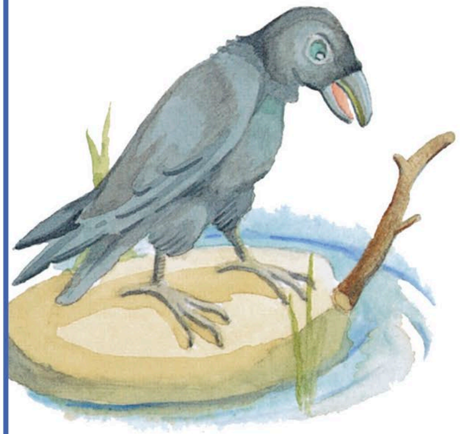


Long ago in Australia, before there were any people, the animals could talk. They had never known death, but one day a young cockatoo fell out of a high tree and broke his neck.

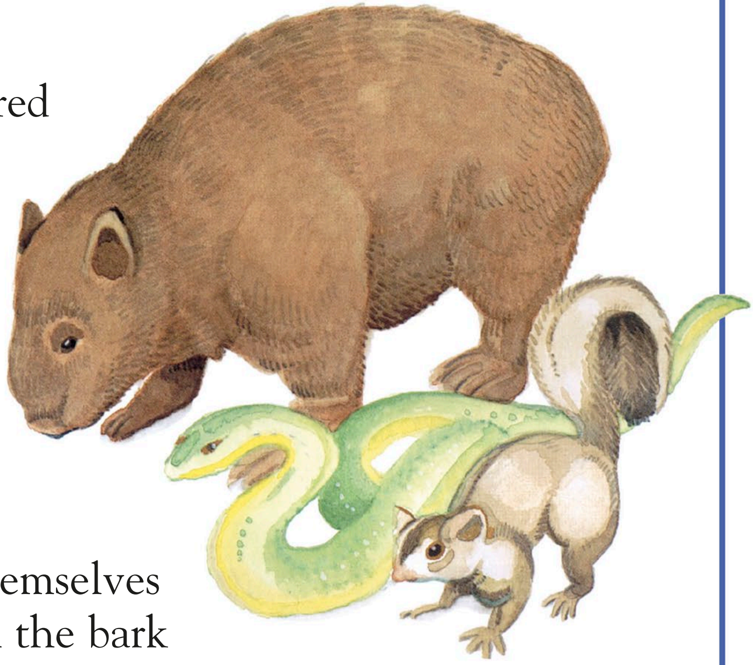
"What's the matter with him?" asked the kookaburra. "He won't open his eyes." "Why doesn't he get up and fly away?" asked the wagtail.



No one could understand that the cockatoo was dead. Then the crow threw a stick into the river. It sank then rose again.

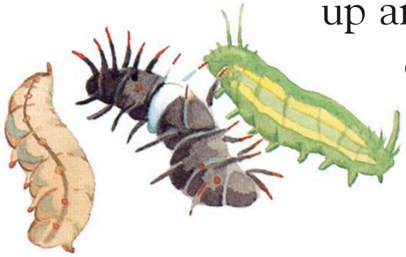


"That's what has happened to the cockatoo," said the crow. "He has gone to another world and will return."

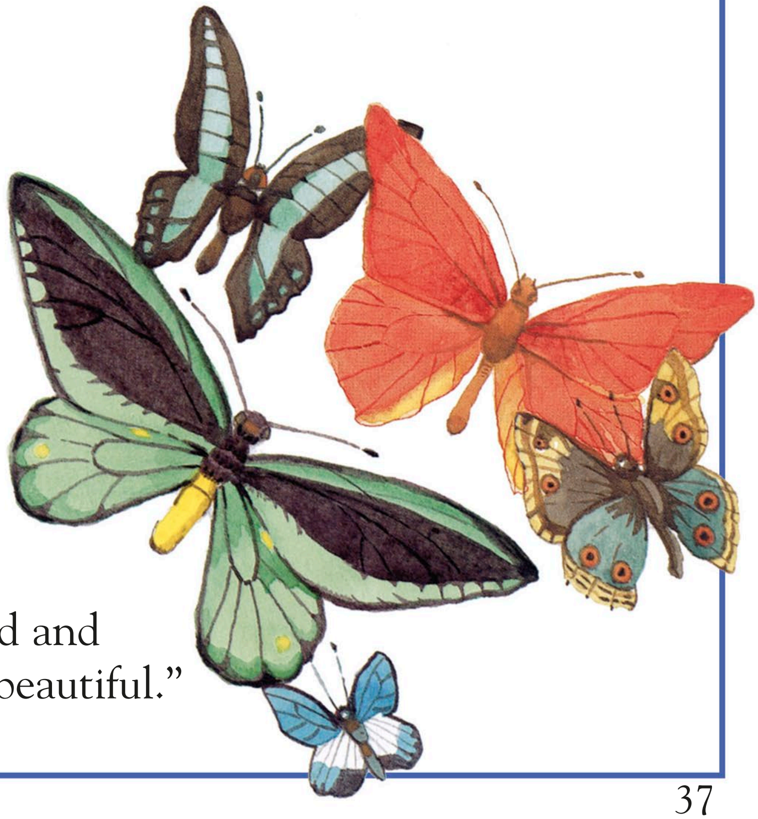


Then all the animals volunteered to go to the other world. The opossum, wombat, and snake all hid for the winter. But when they woke up in the spring, they were just the same.

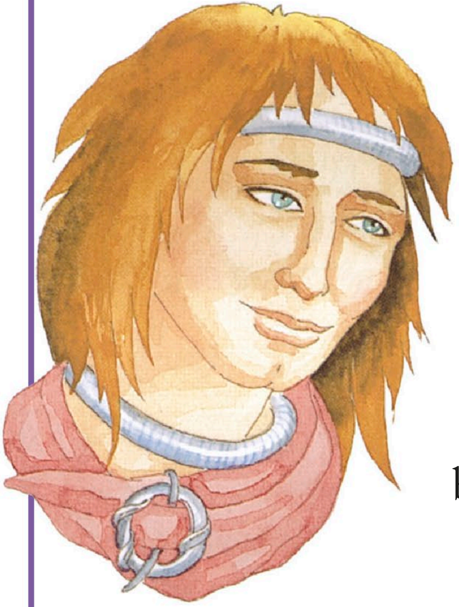
Then the insects tried it. All the caterpillars wrapped themselves up and hid in the bark of trees or under the ground.



When the next spring came, all the caterpillars had disappeared. Instead, the Australian countryside was full of butterflies—yellow, red, blue, and green.



"You've solved the mystery of death," said all the animals. "You've been to the other world and come back different and more beautiful."



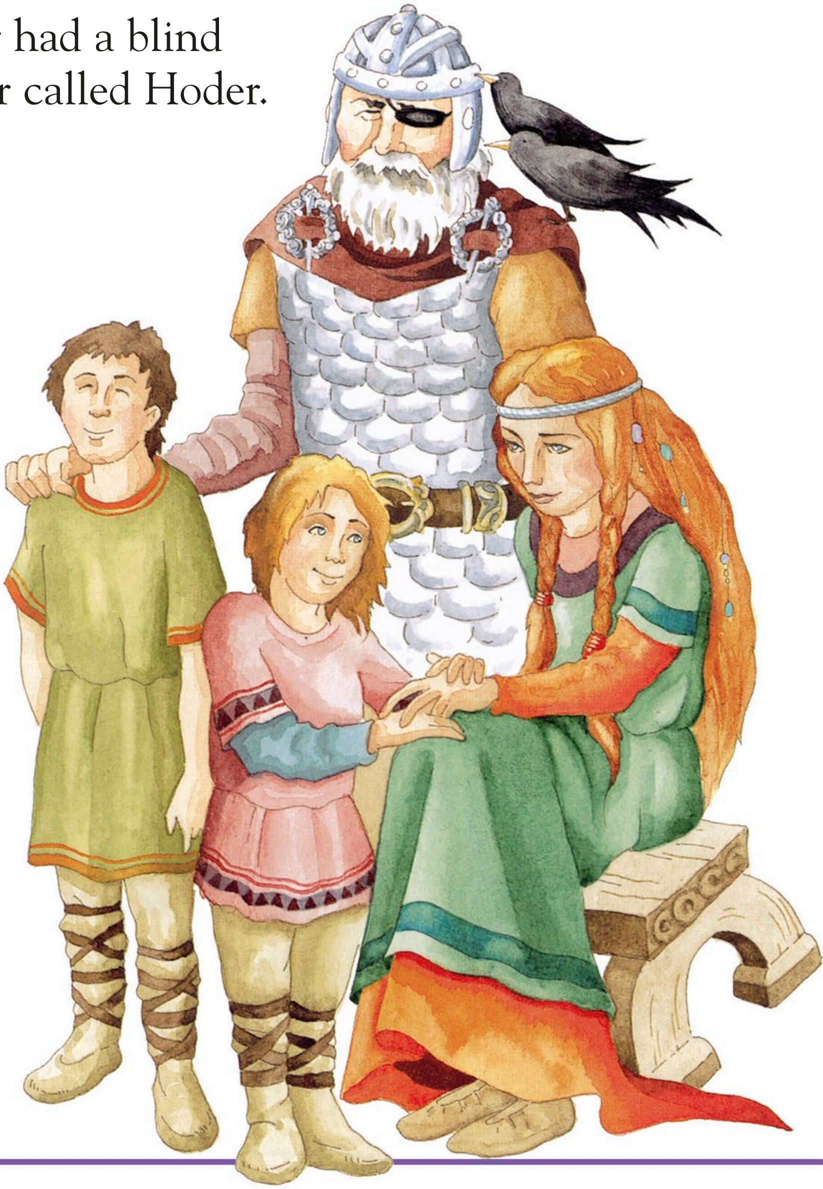
Balder the Beautiful

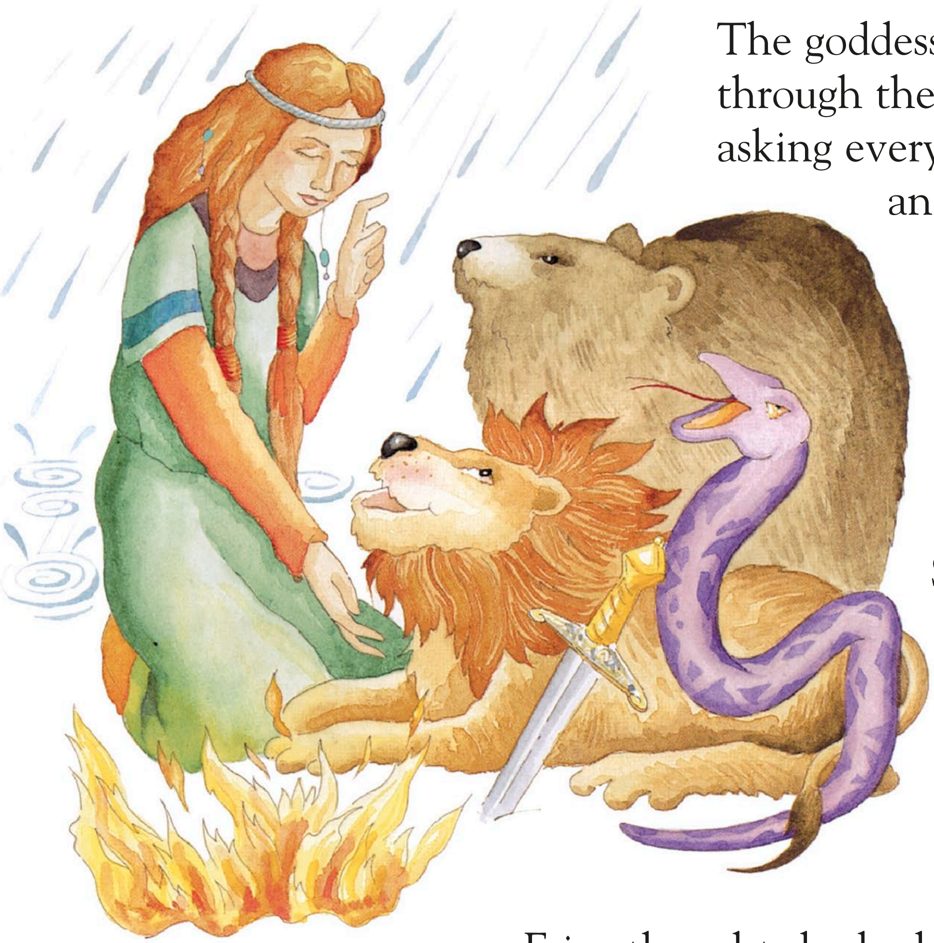
Balder was the most beautiful of all the Norse gods. He was the son of Odin, the chief god, and his wife, Frigg.

Balder had a blind brother called Hoder.

Frigg loved them both very much. But she was scared that something bad might happen to Balder, so she decided on a plan to keep him safe forever.

Frigg thought that if she asked everything in the whole world to promise never to hurt her beautiful son, Balder would never die.



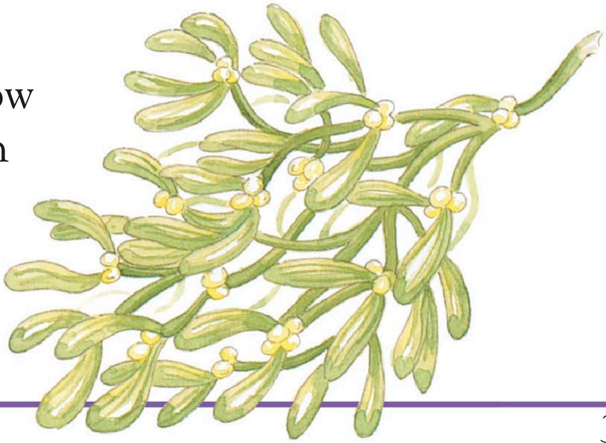


The goddess Frigg traveled through the whole world, asking every plant and animal to promise never to hurt Balder. And she asked every stone the same. And every metal.

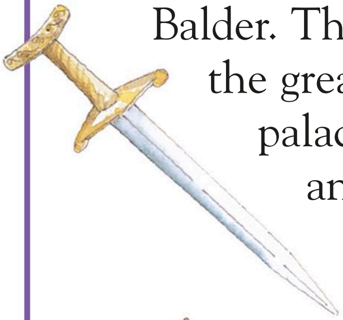
She asked fire and water and the four winds to make the same promise.

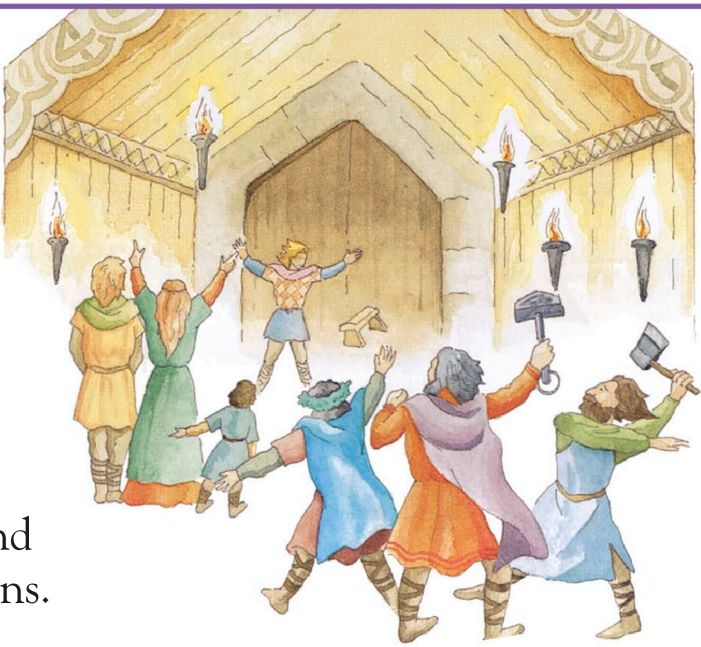
Frigg thought she had asked everything in the living world and every mineral not to hurt her precious son.

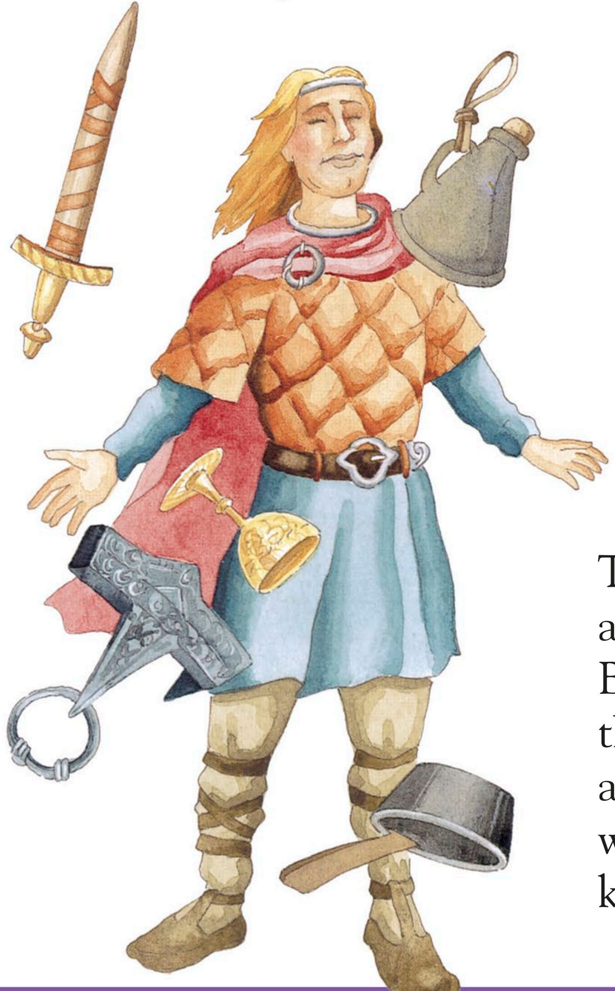
But Frigg had forgotten to ask one thing. It was a plant that didn't grow in the ground, the mistletoe, which grows on oak trees. By forgetting to speak to the mistletoe, Frigg made a terrible mistake.



The gods and goddesses had so much fun when Frigg told them that nothing could hurt her son Balder. They gathered in the great hall of Odin's palace, Valhalla, and made a huge pile of sharp and heavy weapons.



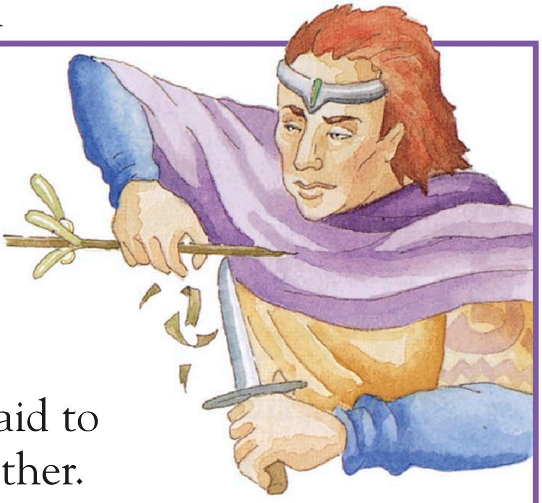


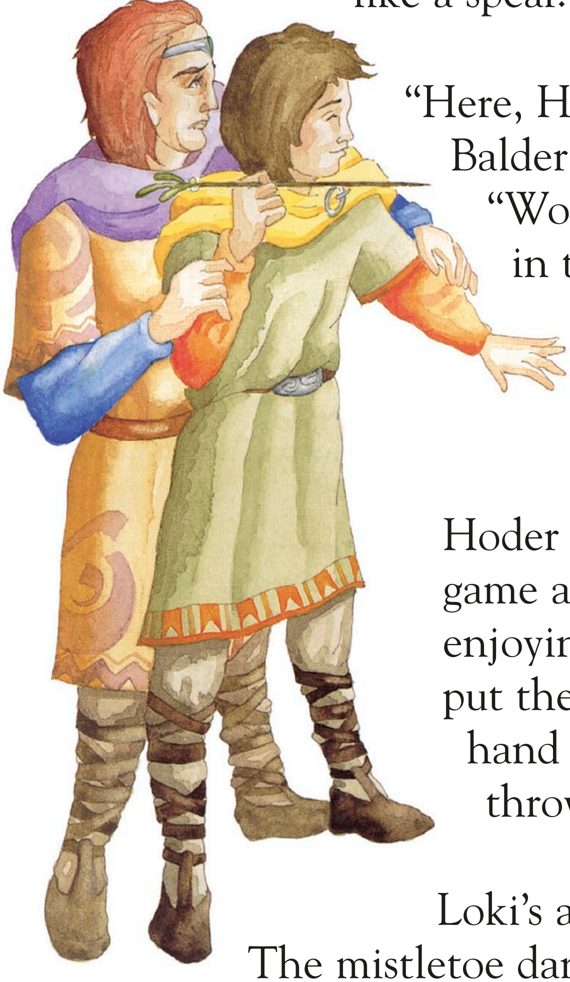


Balder stood at one end of the hall and the gods, his family, hurled axes and swords and spears and arrows at him.

They threw furniture, too, and cups and bowls and burning firebrands. But everything fell harmlessly to the ground. Balder stood unhurt amid the missiles because they were all made of things that kept their promise to Frigg.

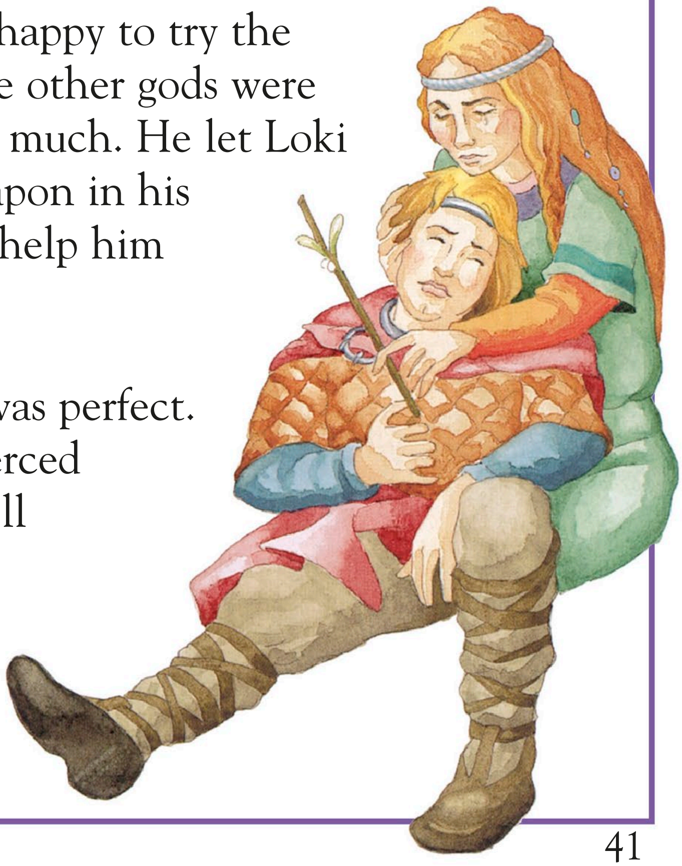
Loki, a cunning and mean god, knew about the mistletoe. He cut a branch of it and sharpened the stem to a point, like a spear.





"Here, Hoder," he said to Balder's blind brother. "Wouldn't you like to join in the game? I can help you throw a weapon at Balder."

Hoder was happy to try the game all the other gods were enjoying so much. He let Loki put the weapon in his hand and help him throw it.

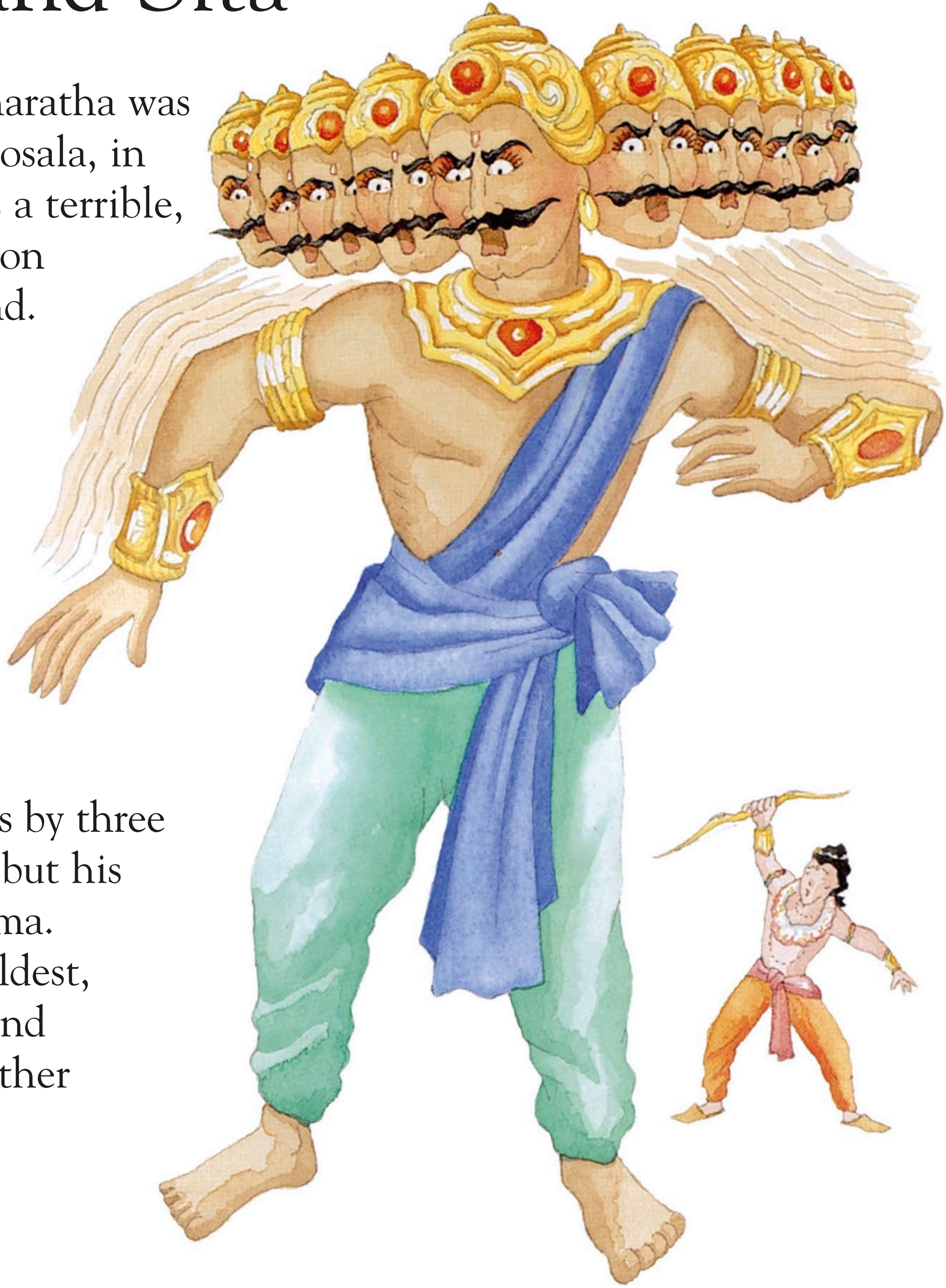


Loki's aim was perfect. The mistletoe dart pierced Balder's chest and he fell down dead. Loki was punished but his trick taught Odin that there were some things even a god couldn't control.

Rama and Sita

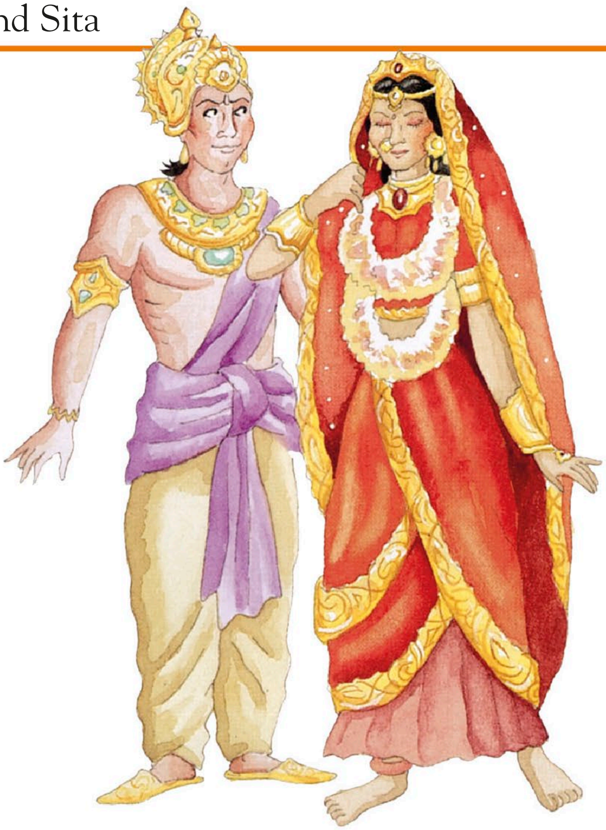
When Dasharatha was king of Kosala, in India, there was a terrible, ten-headed demon ravaging the land. Ravana was his name and King Dasharatha prayed to the gods to give him sons strong enough to kill the demon.

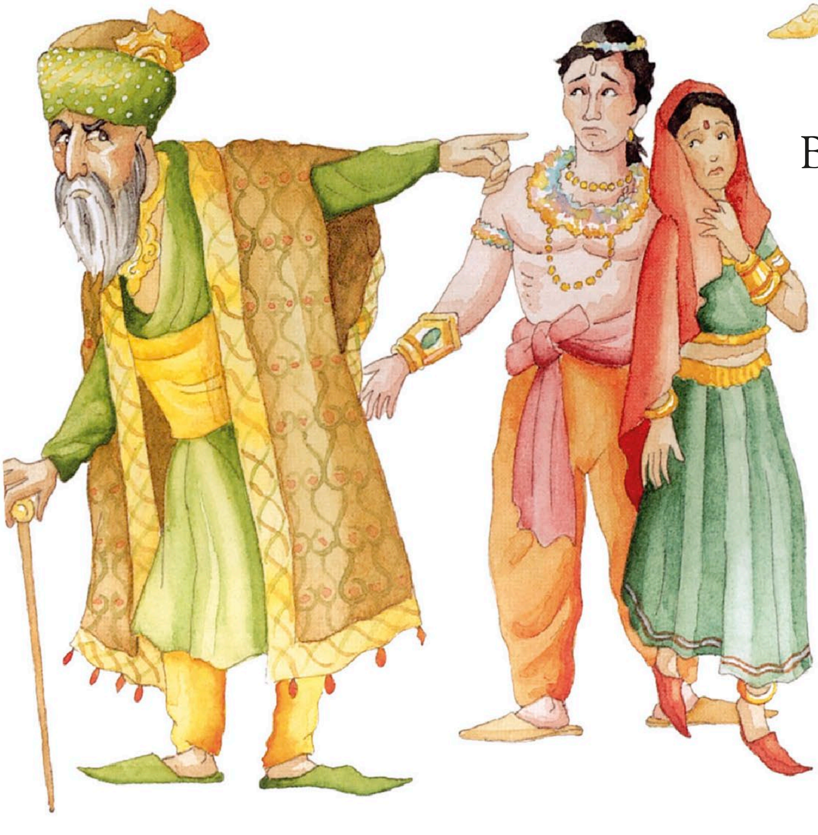
He had four sons by three different wives, but his favorite was Rama. Rama was the eldest, and his best friend was his half-brother Lakshmana.



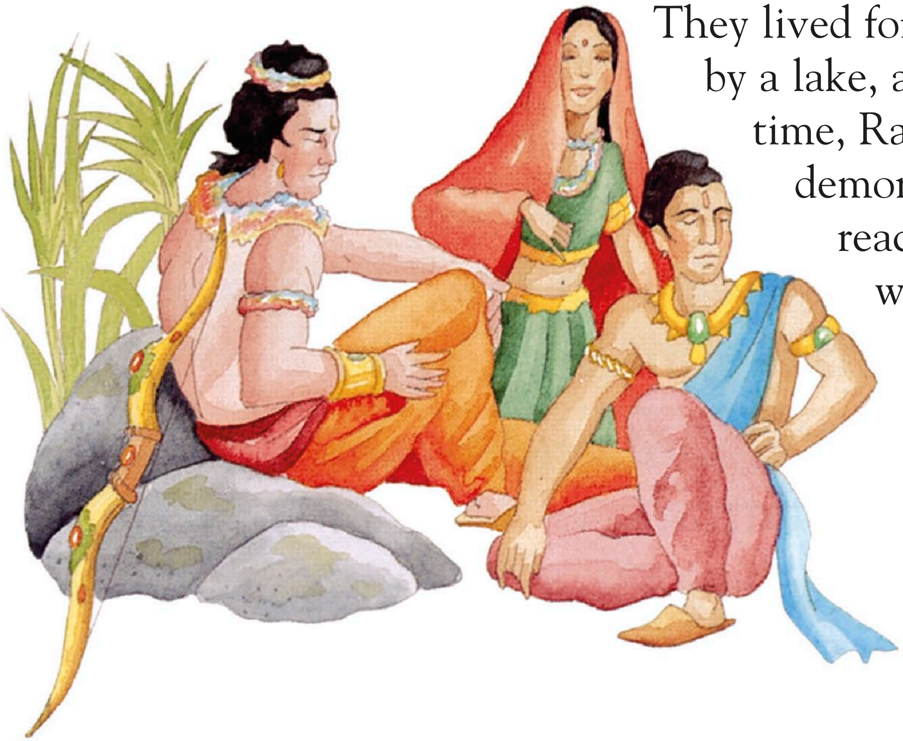
Rama grew up strong and handsome, and he won for himself a beautiful princess called Sita.

Rama and Sita got married, and Lakshmana married Sita's sister. They were all very happy.

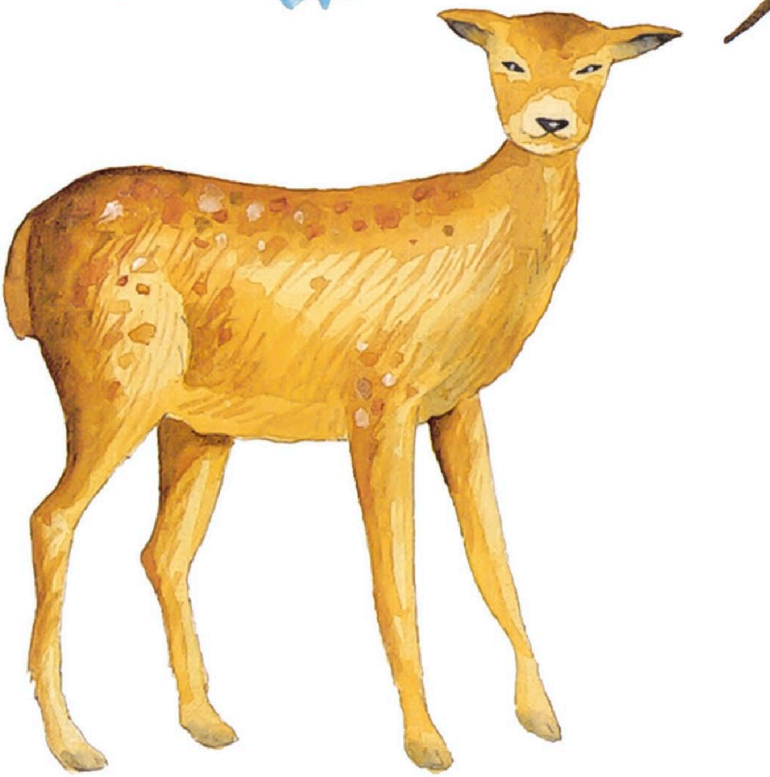




But it didn't last. King Dasharatha chose Rama to be his heir, but the mother of one of the other sons tricked the king into banishing Rama for fourteen years. Rama and Sita went to live in the forest and Lakshmana chose to go with them.

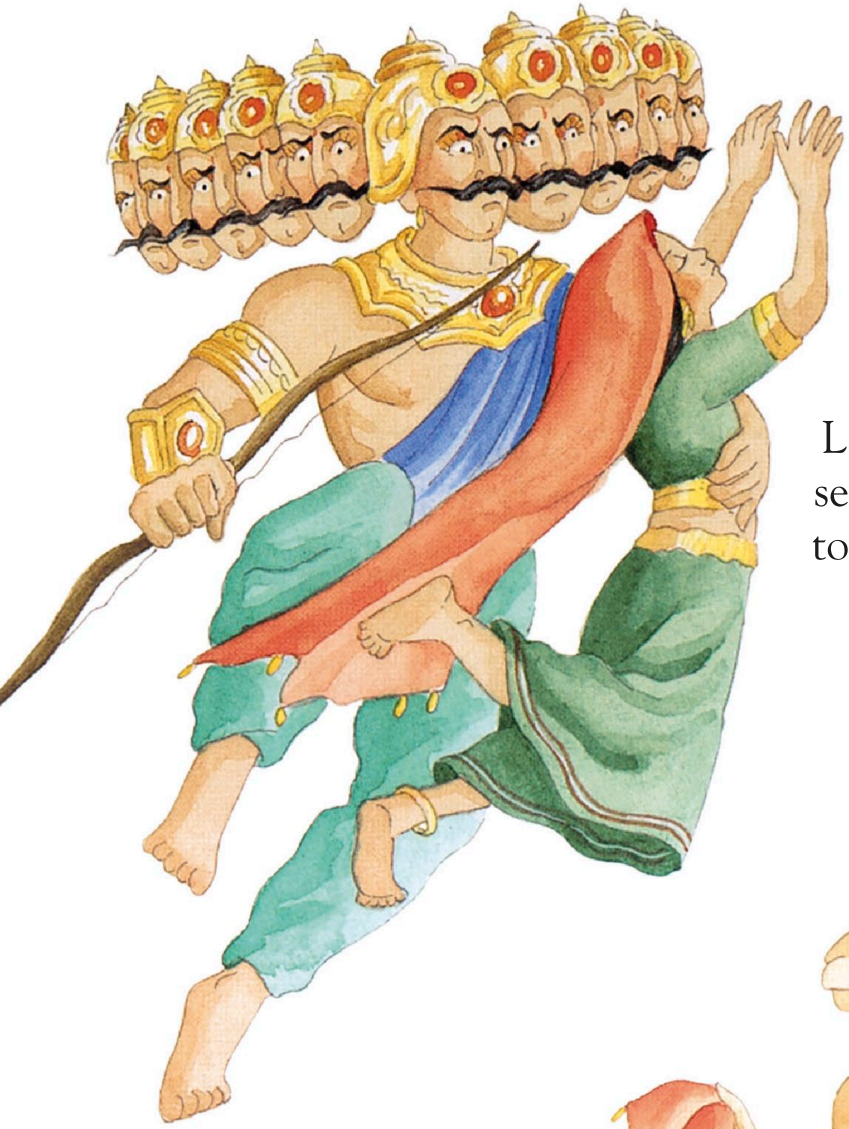


They lived for ten years
by a lake, and during this
time, Rama killed many
demons. The news
reached Ravana,
who decided to
punish Rama by
stealing his wife.



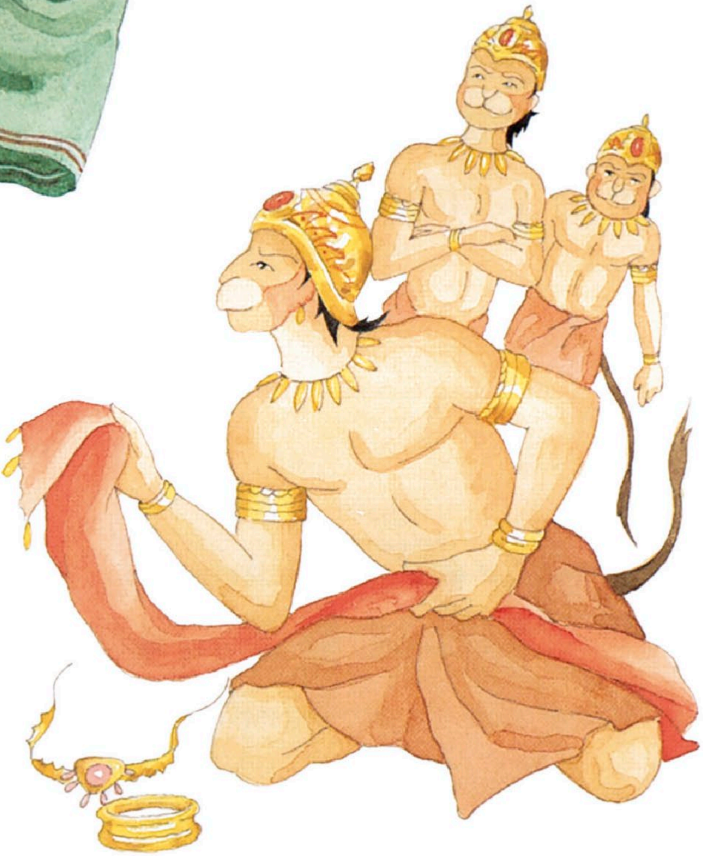
Another demon disguised
himself as a golden deer
and went to visit Sita.
As soon as she tried to
stroke him, he leaped away.

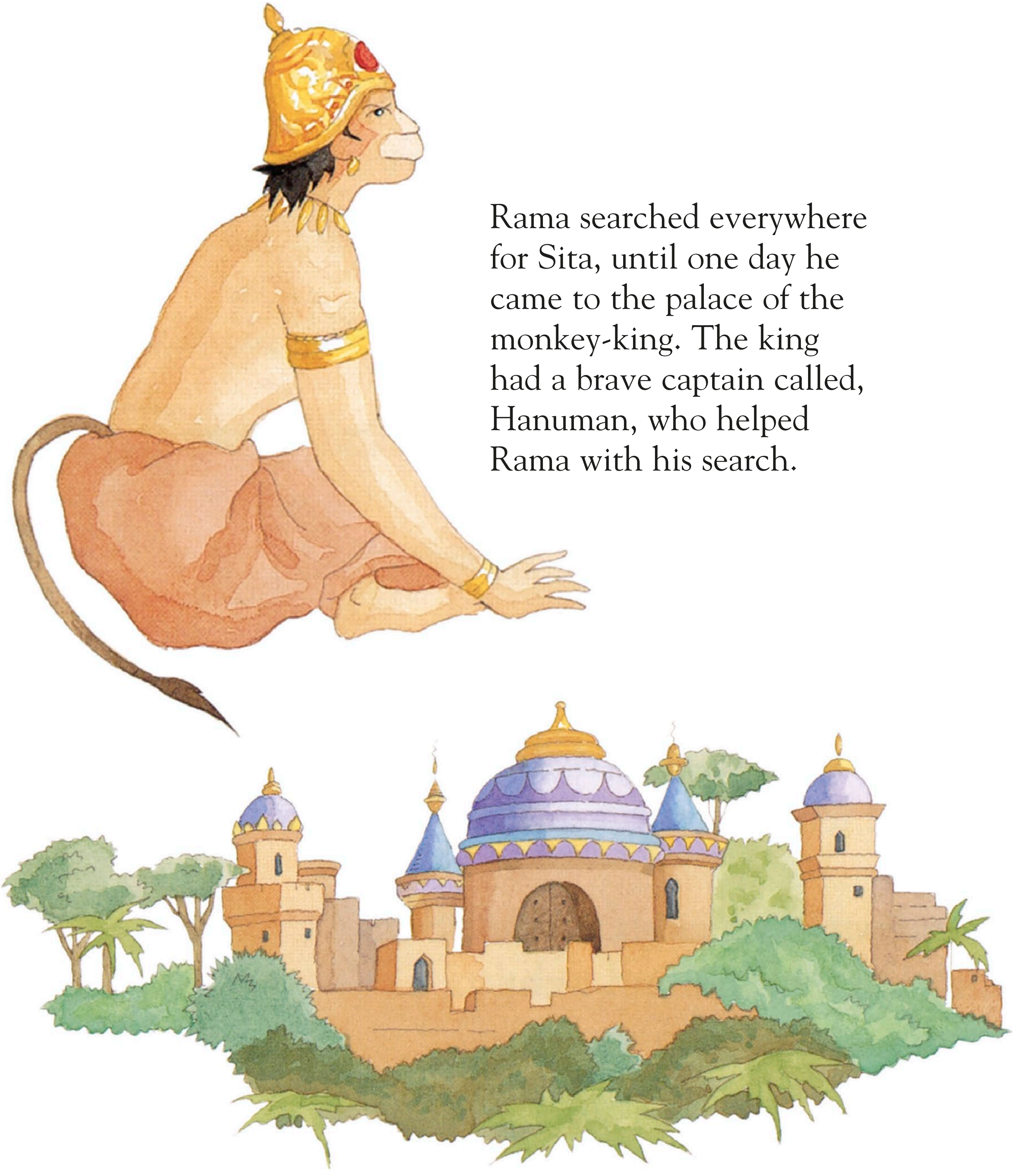
Rama was suspicious.
He left Sita with
Lakshmana and went
in search of the deer.



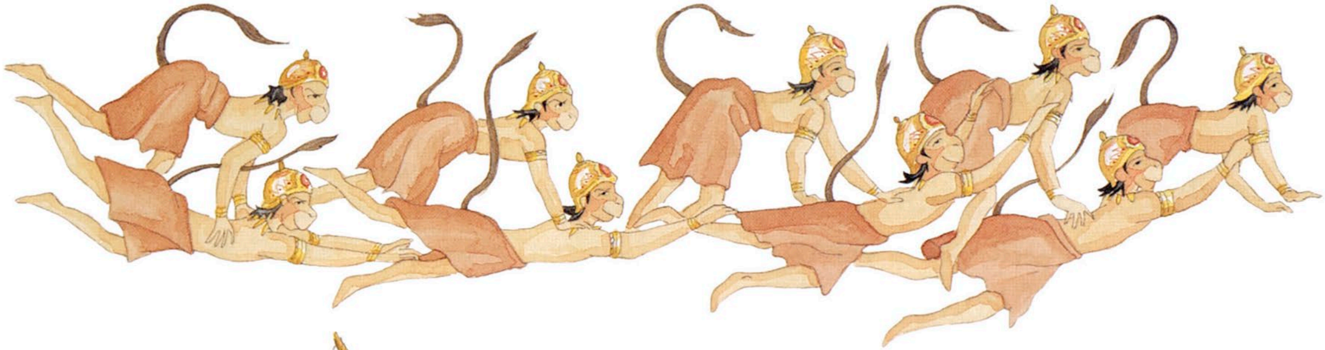
Rama shot the deer with his arrows and as it died it cried out, “Help, Sita! Help, Lakshmana!” in Rama’s own voice. Sita heard it and sent Lakshmana to go and see what had happened to her husband.

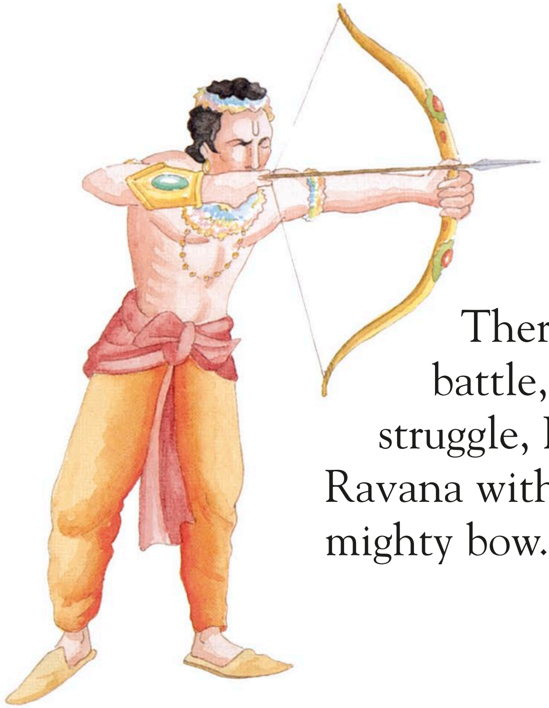
At that moment Ravana struck. He carried Sita off. She dropped some jewels and her golden scarf, where some very special monkeys found them.





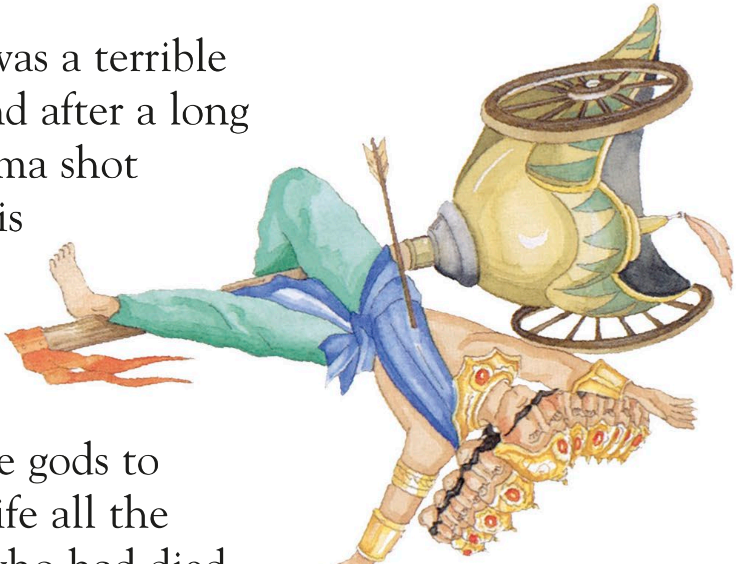
Rama searched everywhere for Sita, until one day he came to the palace of the monkey-king. The king had a brave captain called, Hanuman, who helped Rama with his search.



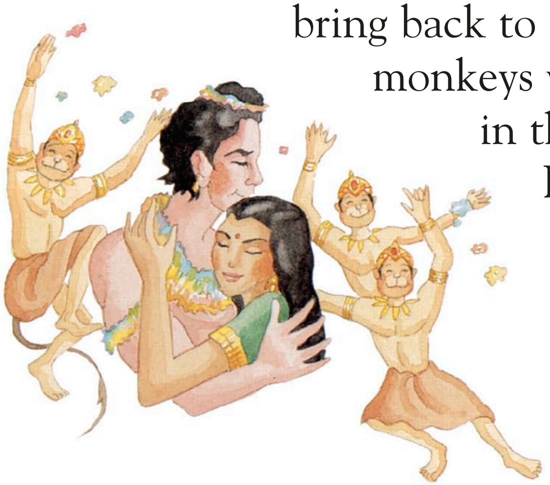


Hanuman found Sita on the island of Lanka. His army of monkeys made a bridge to the island and swarmed across it.

There was a terrible battle, and after a long struggle, Rama shot Ravana with his mighty bow.

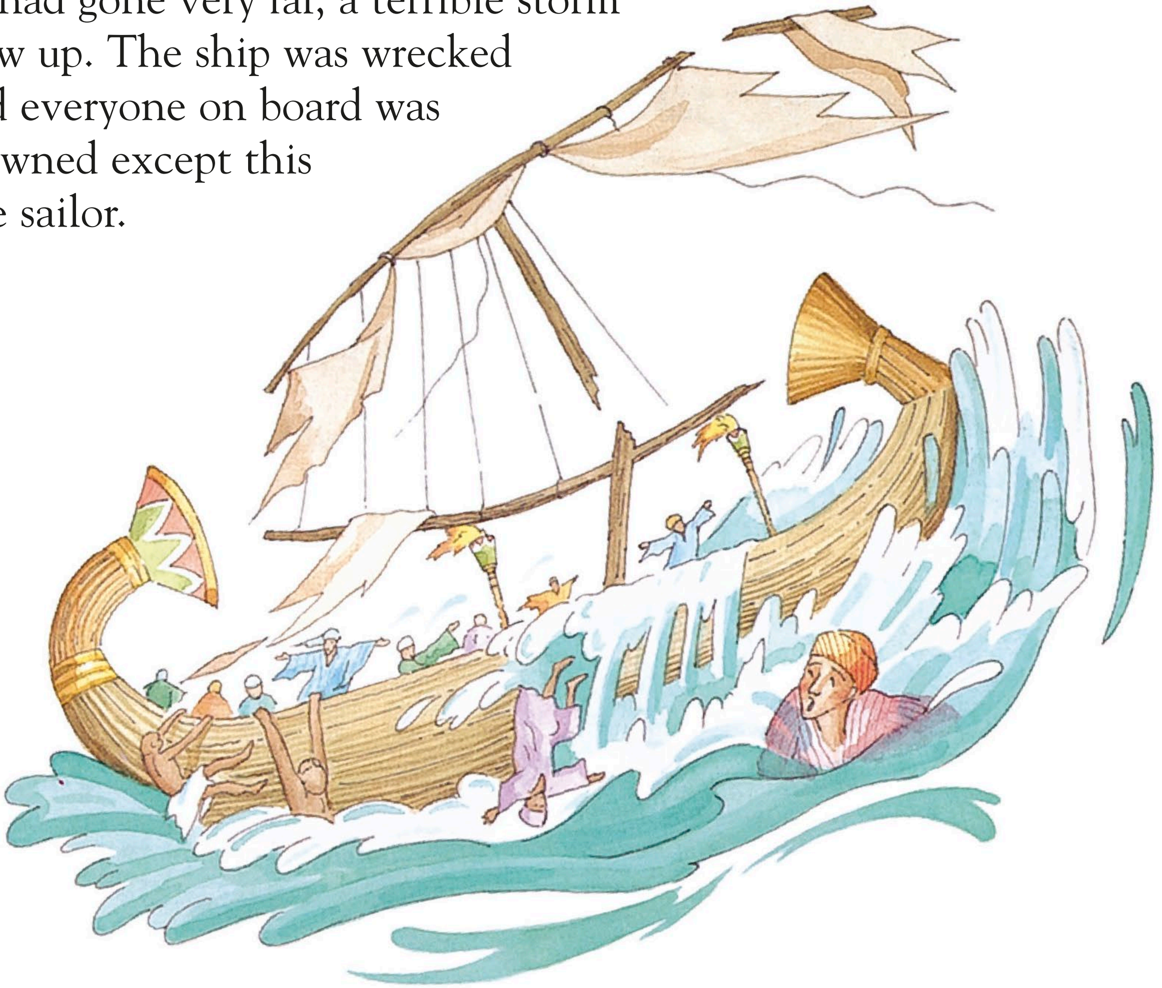


Rama asked the gods to bring back to life all the monkeys who had died in the battle. And Rama and Sita were together again. Their long banishment was over, and they became king and queen of Kosala, never to be separated again.

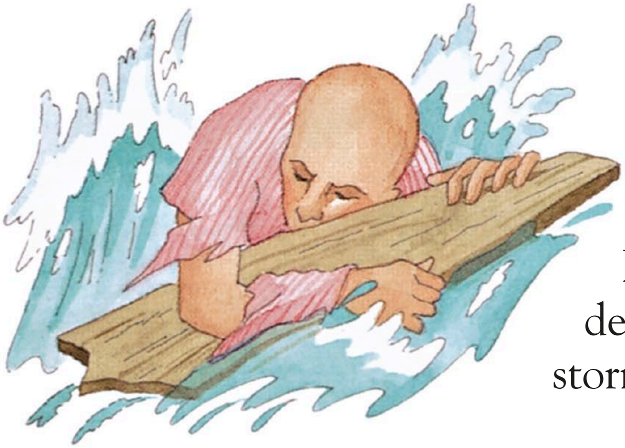


The Enchanted Island

There was a sailor in ancient Egypt who set out on a voyage. But before he had gone very far, a terrible storm blew up. The ship was wrecked and everyone on board was drowned except this one sailor.

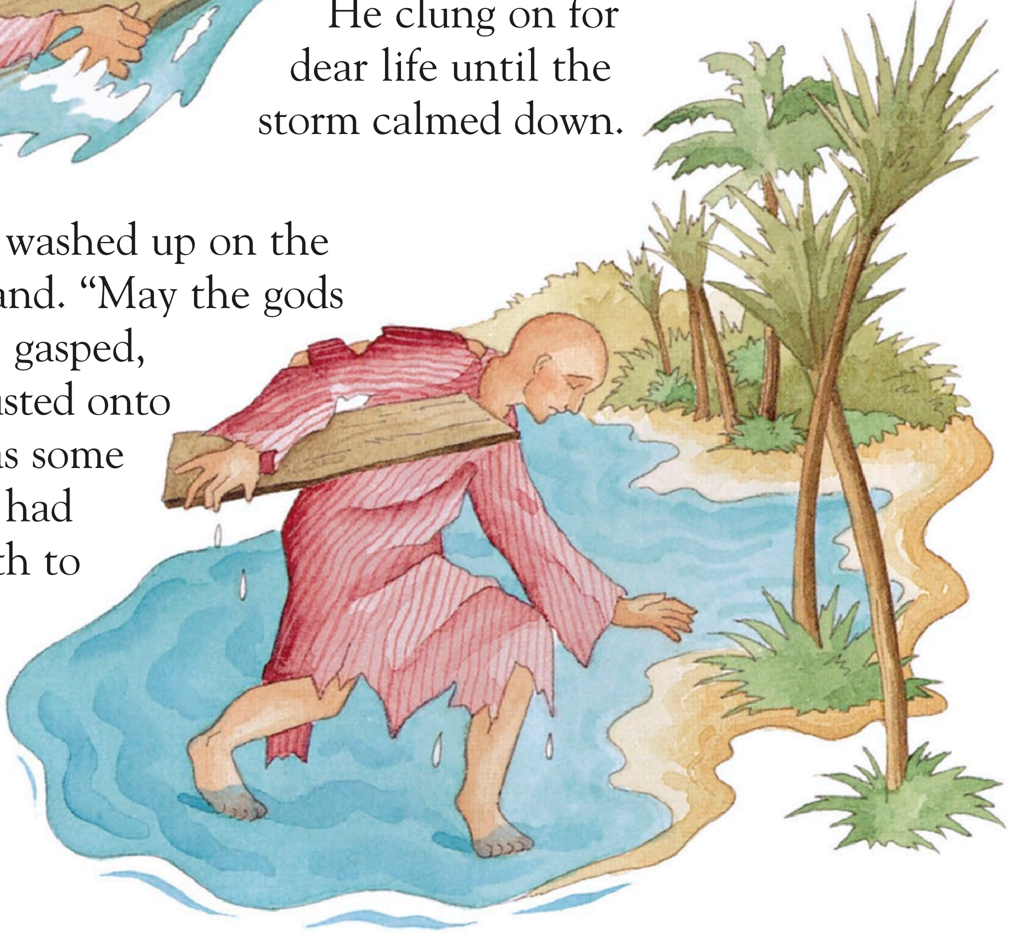


He was flung into the sea with all the other sailors, but luckily he found a bit of wood from the broken ship.

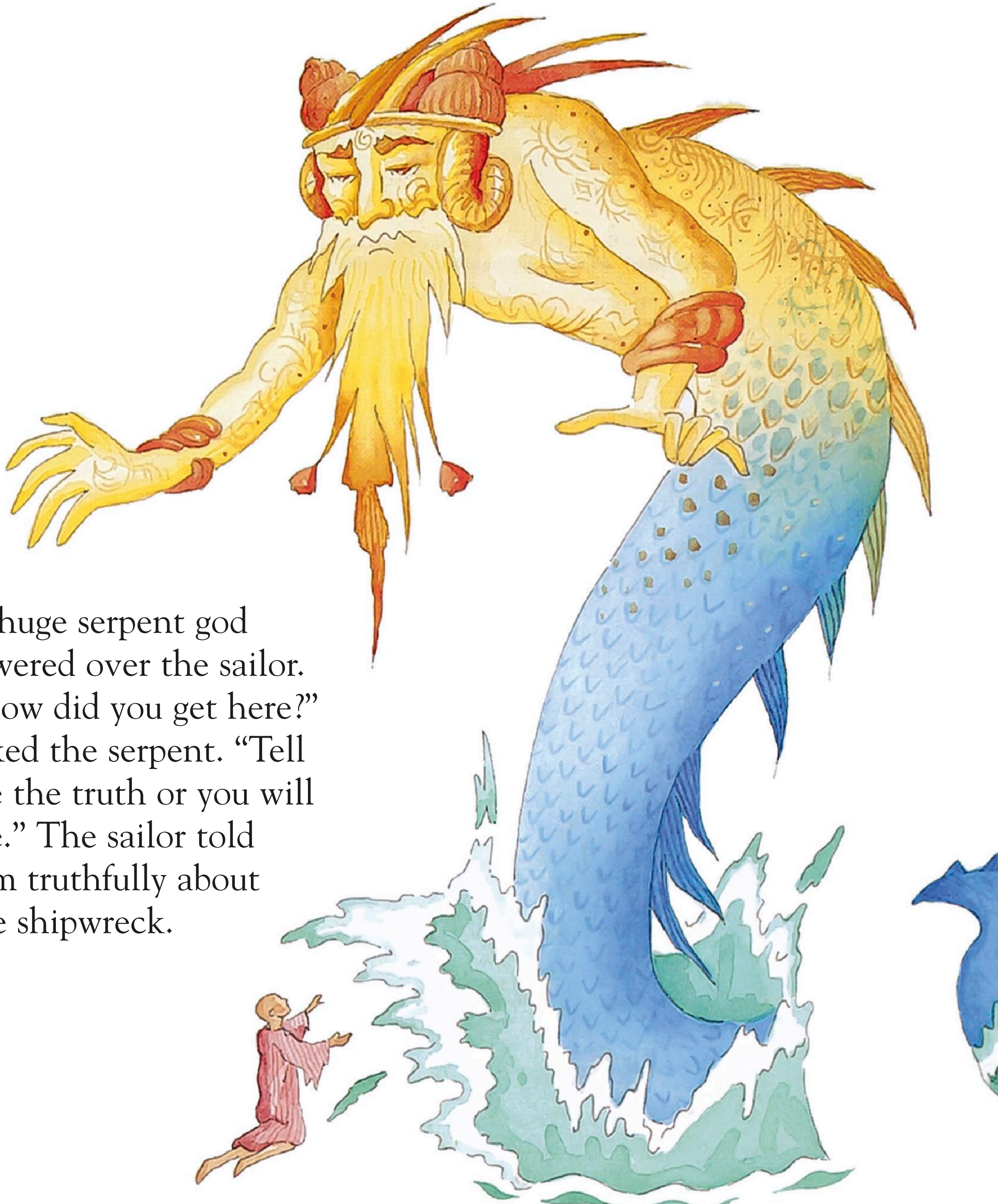


He clung on for dear life until the storm calmed down.

At last he was washed up on the shore of an island. "May the gods be praised," he gasped, then fell exhausted onto the sand. It was some days before he had enough strength to look for food.

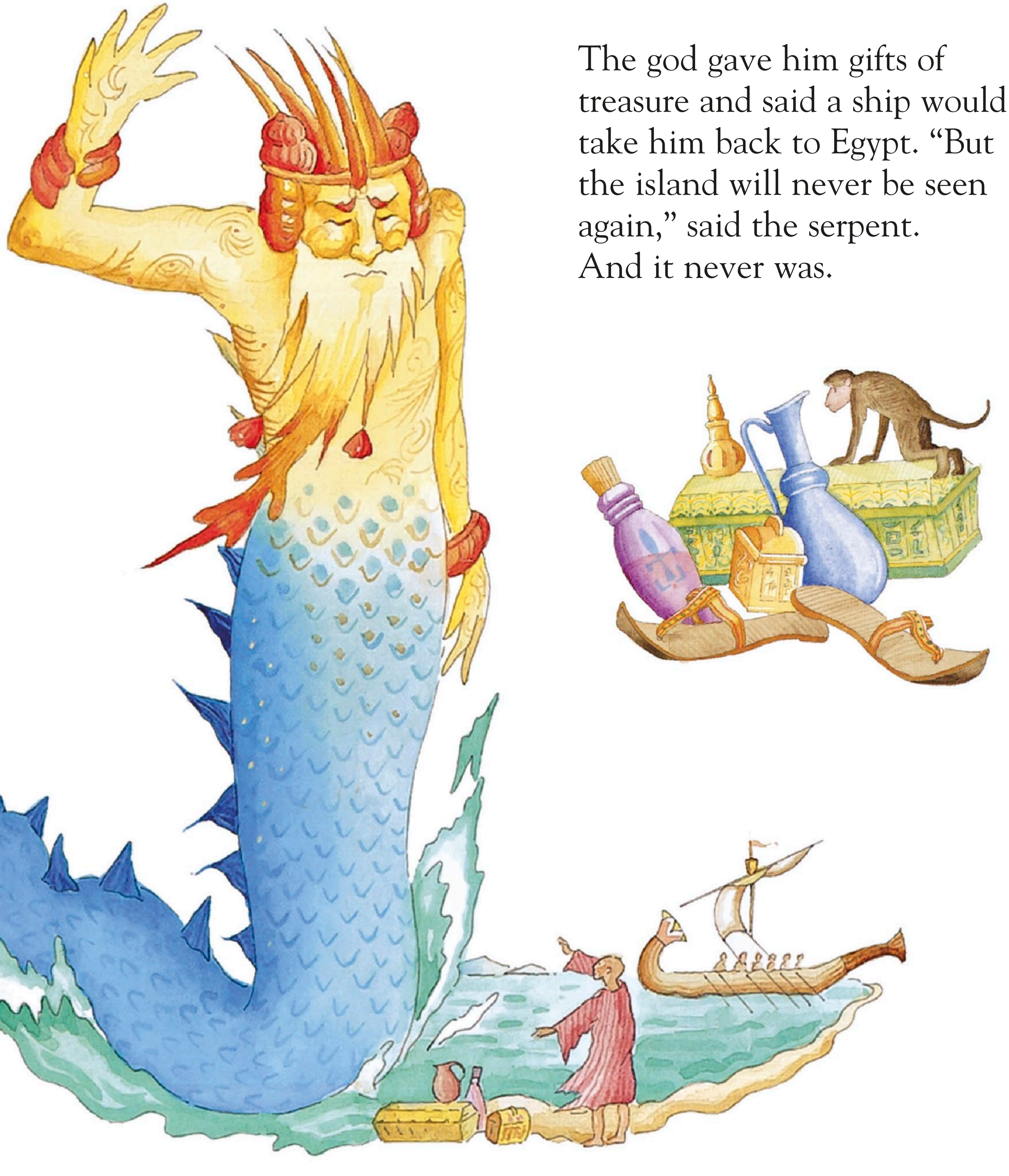


He found that the island was full of fruit, and the sea around it teemed with fish. He sat down to his first meal for days. But before he began to eat, he offered thanks to the gods. Immediately there was a clap of thunder.



A huge serpent god towered over the sailor. "How did you get here?" asked the serpent. "Tell me the truth or you will die." The sailor told him truthfully about the shipwreck.

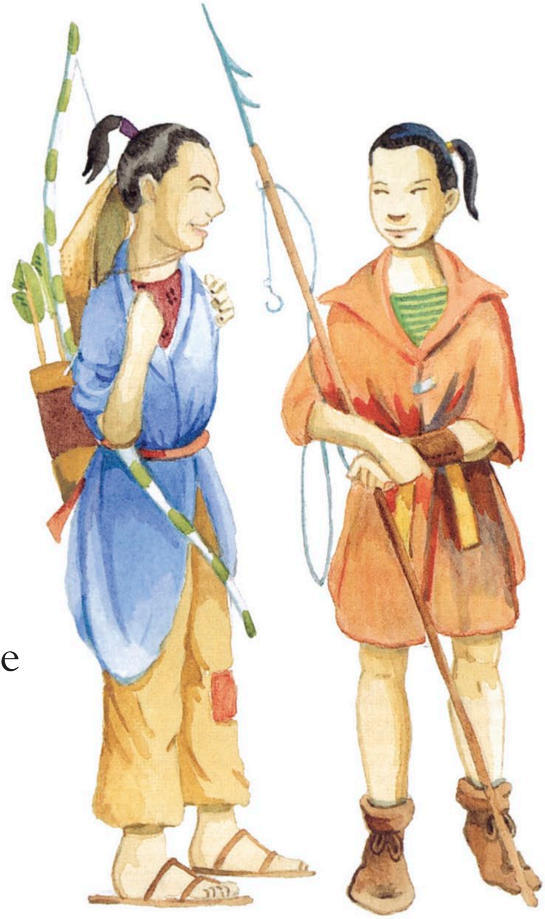
The god gave him gifts of treasure and said a ship would take him back to Egypt. "But the island will never be seen again," said the serpent. And it never was.



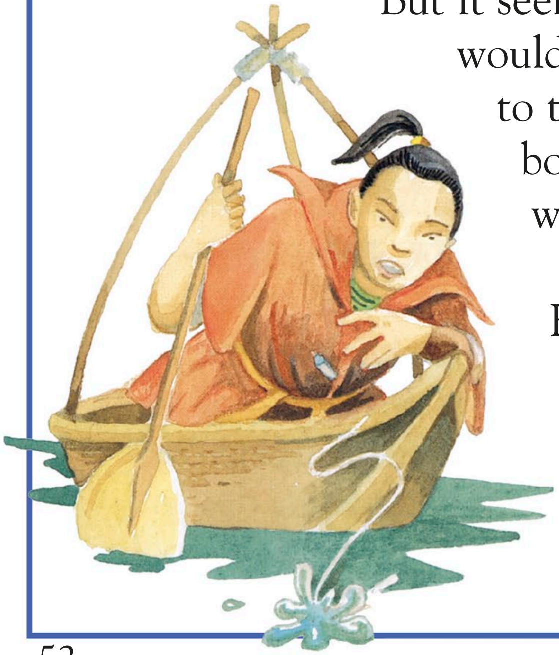
The Kingdom Under the Sea

Hoderi was a great fisherman and Hoori, his younger brother, was a smart hunter. One day, the two brothers decided to swap weapons.

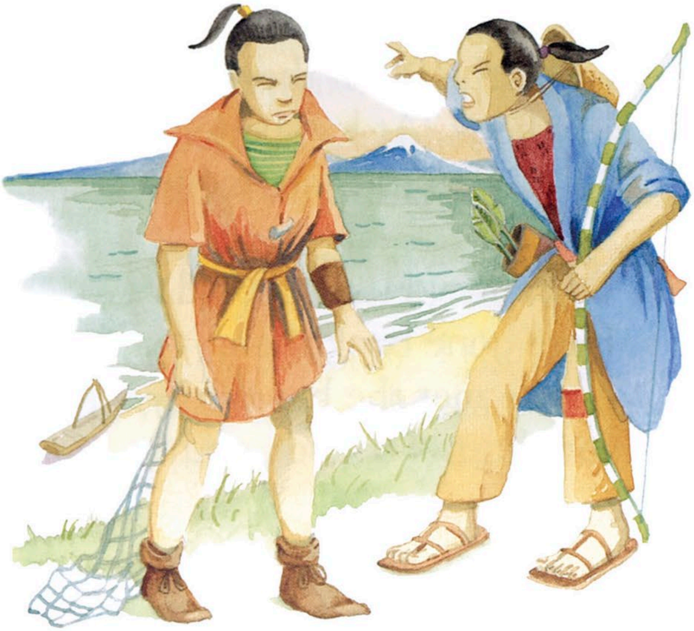
So Hoderi took Hoori's bow and arrows, and Hoori took his brother's fish hook. They agreed to meet at the end of the day and tell each other their adventures.



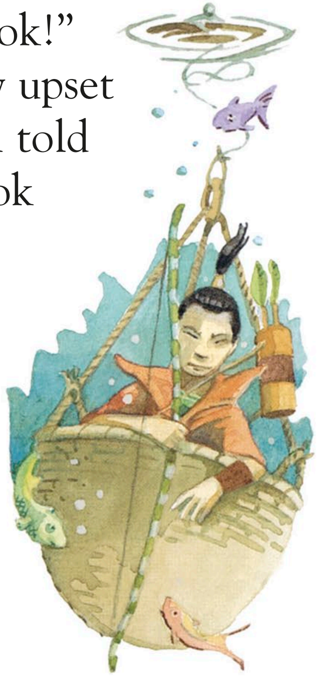
But it seemed as if there wouldn't be much to tell, because both brothers were unlucky.



Hoori didn't catch a single fish all day. And, what was worse, he dropped his brother's fish hook into the water. "What am I going to do?" he said. "Hoderi is going to be so angry with me."

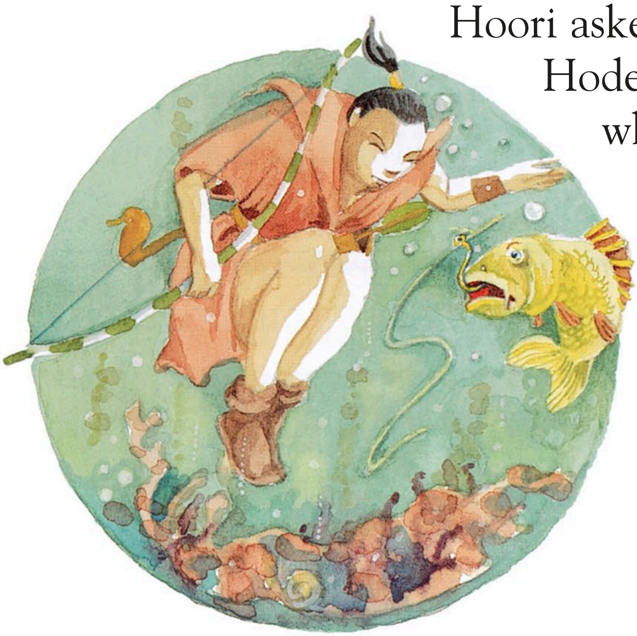


Hoderi came back from his day's hunting in a bad mood. "Hunting is stupid," he said. "I didn't catch anything. Give me back my hook!" He was very upset when Hoori told him the hook was lost.



Hoderi refused to have any other hook. So Hoori was lowered into the sea in a basket to search for the missing one.

He soon found himself at the bottom of the sea, in the palace of the sea god.



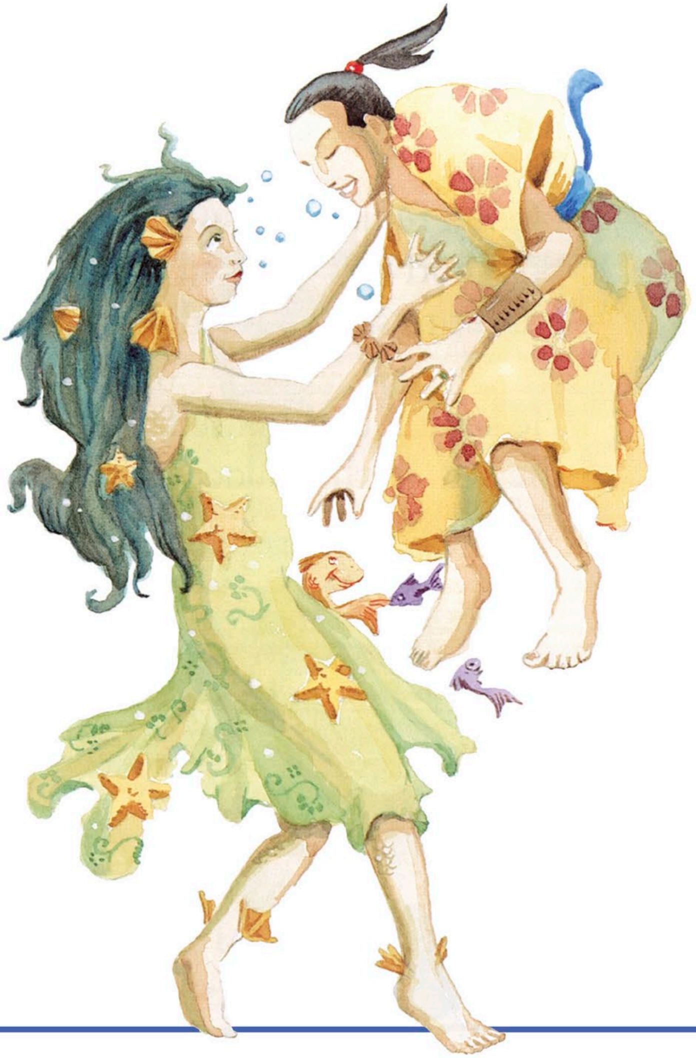
Hoori asked all the fish if they had seen Hoderi's hook. At last he found one who had it in her mouth.

Of course, Hoori should have gone back then, but he met the beautiful daughter of the sea god.

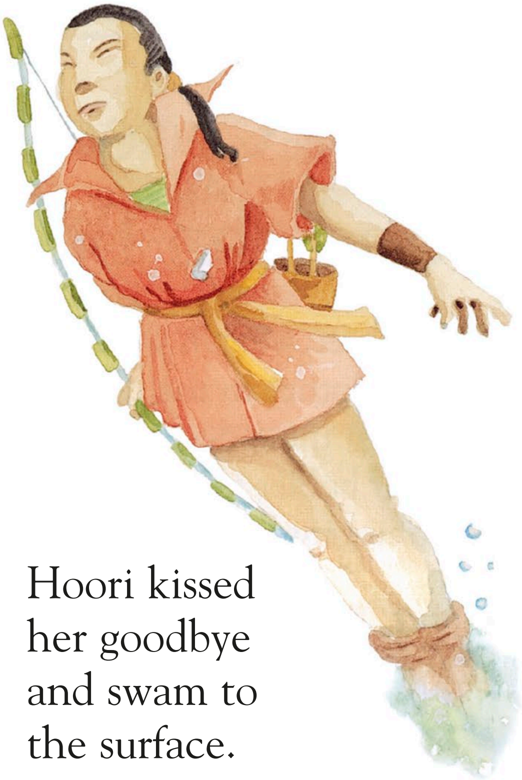
Toyotama was her name, and she was as lovely as a cherry blossom.

But both Toyotama and her father could change into water dragons when they wanted.

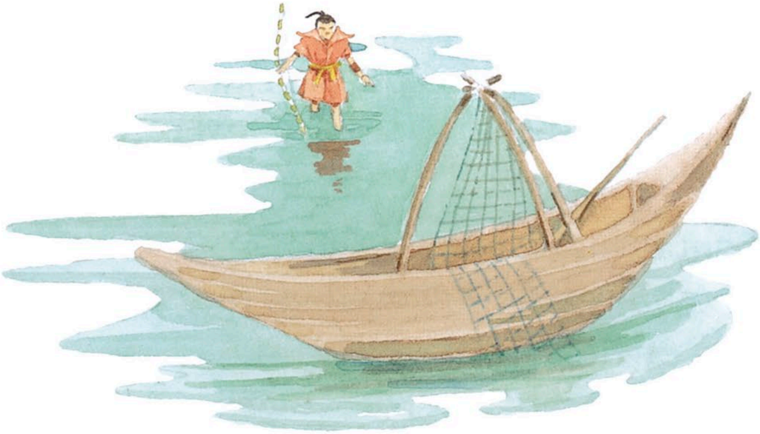
Hoori and Toyotama were married and lived so happily together that Hoori forgot all about returning the fish hook. And he forgot his brother Hoderi, too.



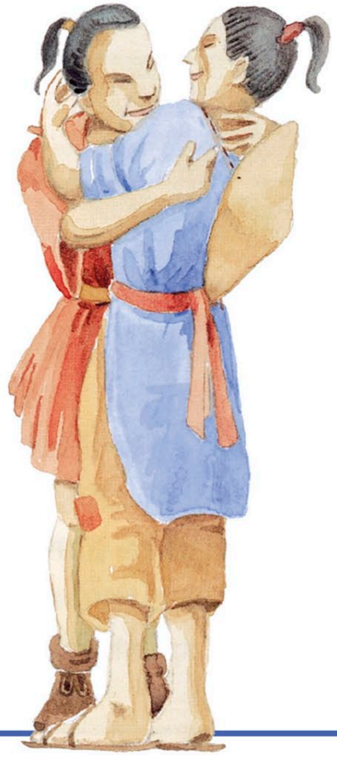
After three years, Hoori suddenly remembered his brother and decided he would return to land and give the hook back to Hoderi.



Toyotama was sad. "I will come and find you, Hoori," she said. "For I am going to bear your child."



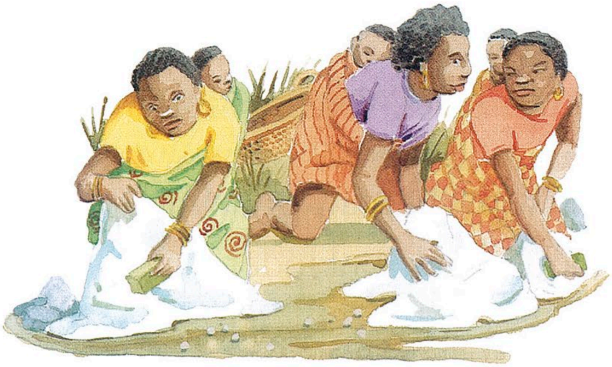
Hoori kissed her goodbye and swam to the surface.



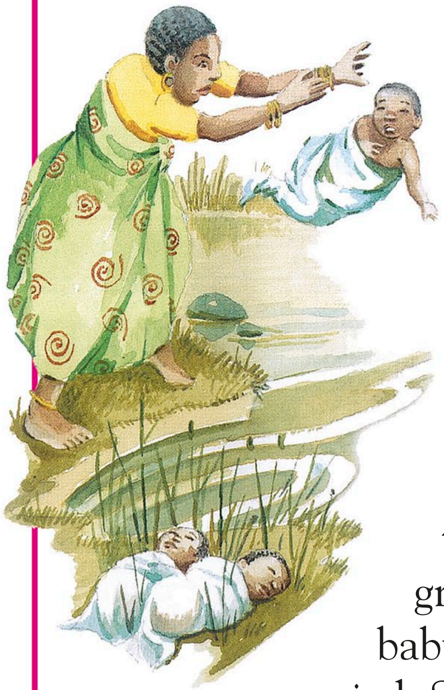
How happy Hoderi was to see his brother again! "I thought you had been drowned years ago," he said.

Princess Toyotama came to the shore and gave birth to a baby boy. Then she turned into a dragon and returned to her kingdom under the sea. Hoori's son became the father of the first emperor of Japan.

The Crocodile and the Baby



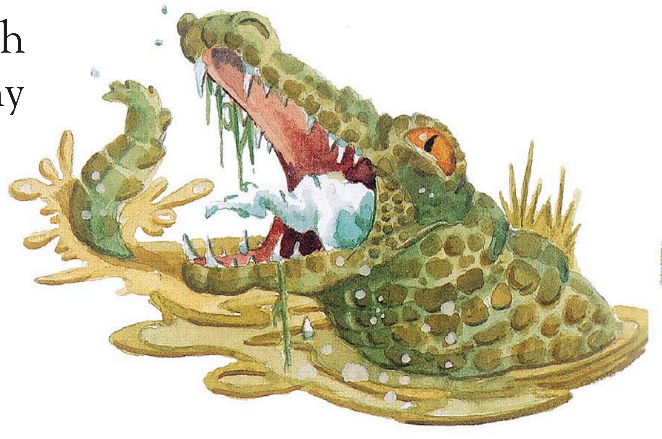
Three women were washing clothes in the river when two of them decided to play a trick on the third. They hid their babies in the rushes, then said, "We have thrown our babies into the river. Why don't you do the same?"

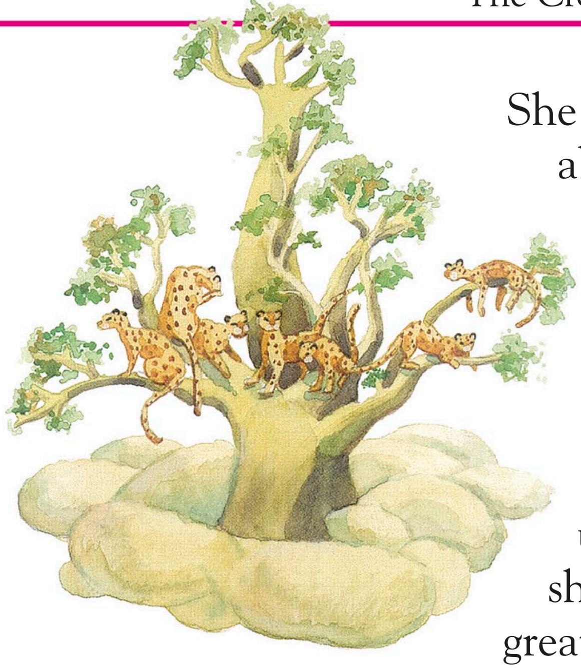


The third woman untied her baby from her back and threw it into the water.

Right away, a huge crocodile swam along and swallowed up the baby in one gulp.

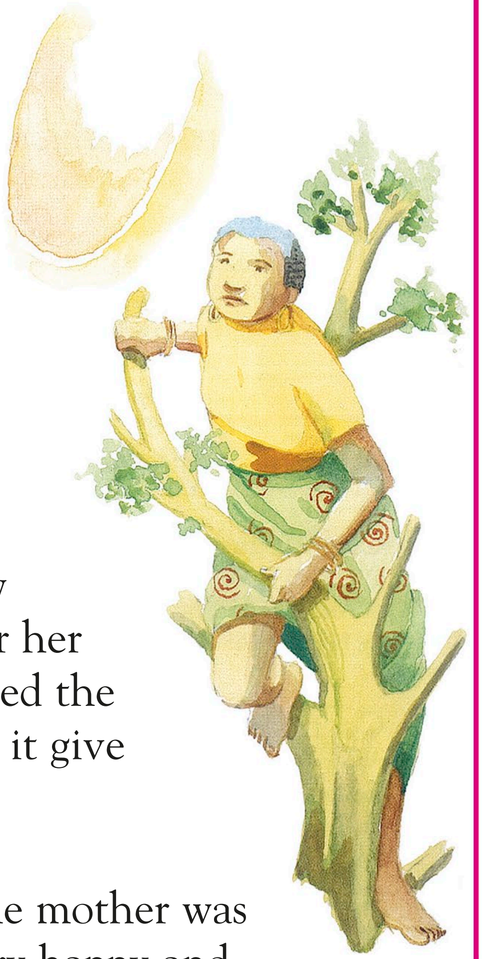
The two cruel women laughed, but the baby's mother tore her hair with grief. "I will get my baby back," she cried. She decided to climb the Paradise tree to ask the great spirit Mulungu for help.



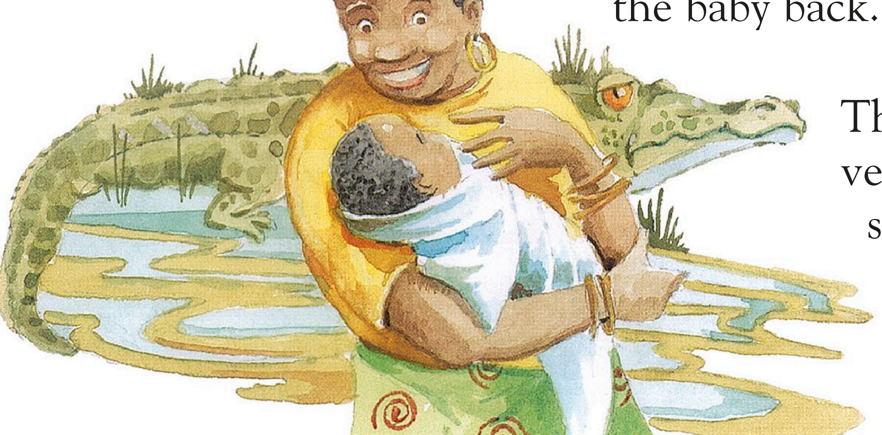


She climbed and climbed until she was above the clouds. There she met a tribe of beautiful leopards. They let her pass because she was polite to them.

On she climbed, past birds and fish, until in the end, she reached the great spirit Mulungu.



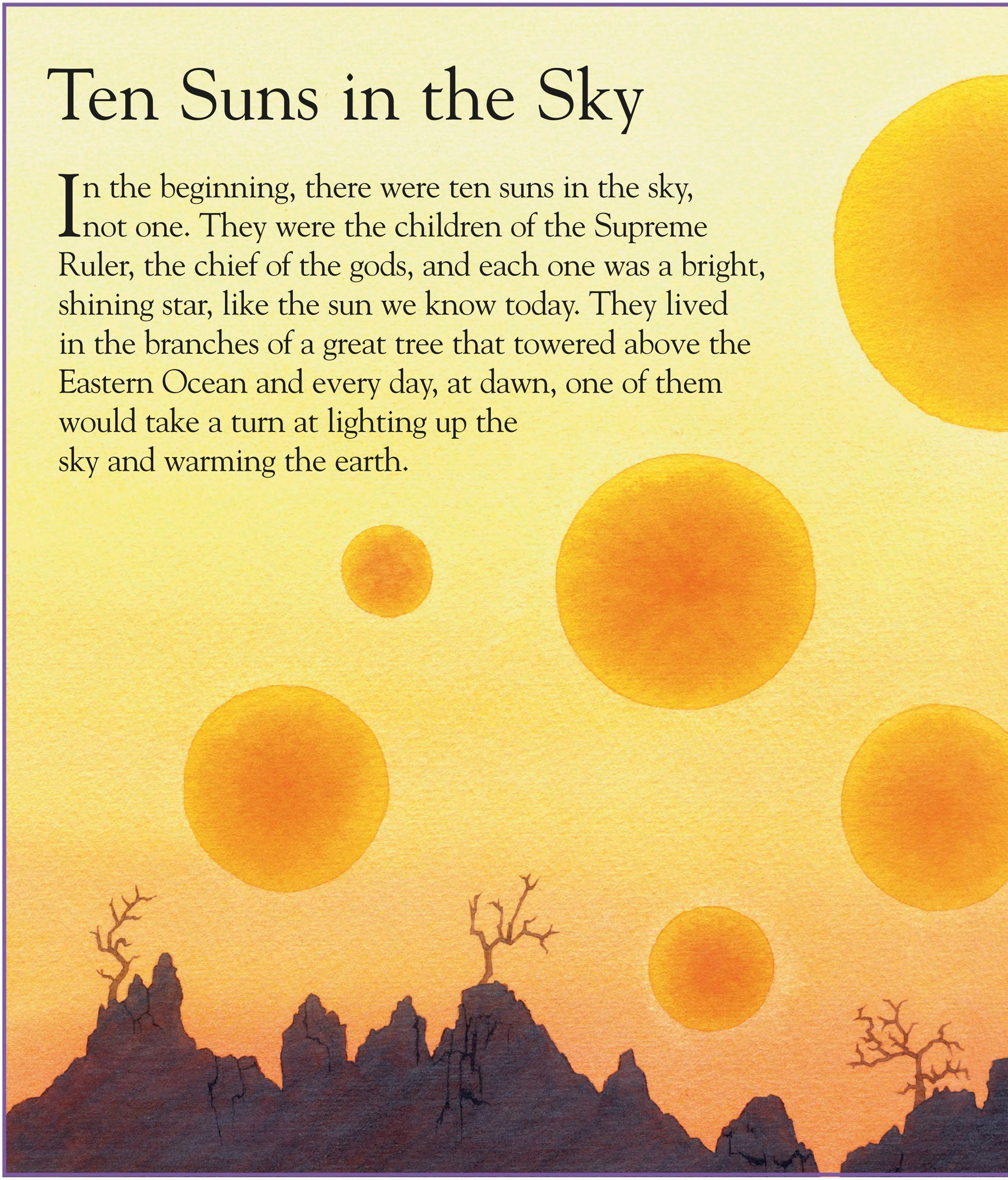
At the very top of the tree, she told her story. "Please give my baby back," she begged. And Mulungu was so impressed by her goodness and love for her baby that he summoned the crocodile and made it give the baby back.

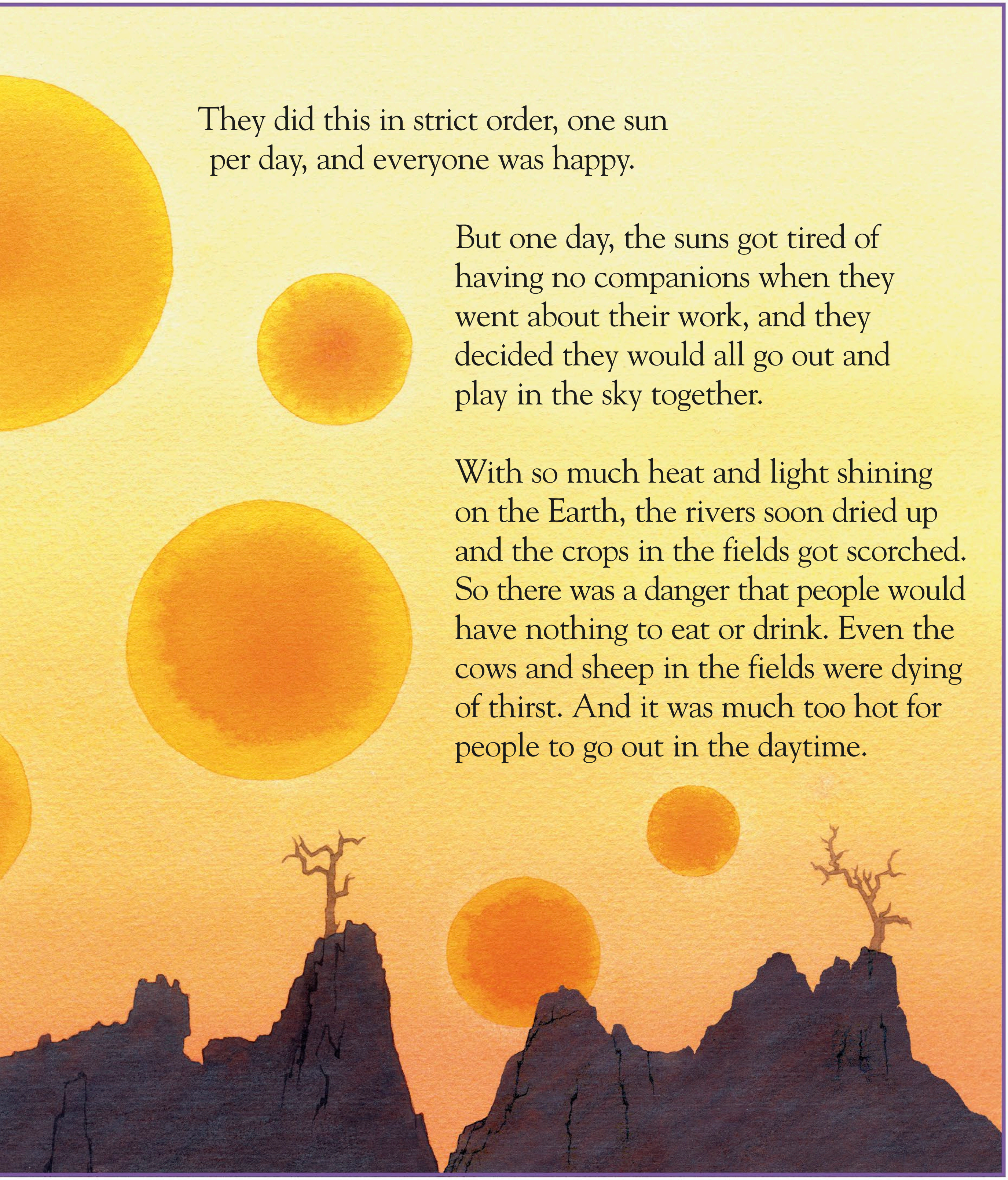


The mother was very happy and so was her baby. The only sad one was the crocodile.

Ten Suns in the Sky

In the beginning, there were ten suns in the sky, not one. They were the children of the Supreme Ruler, the chief of the gods, and each one was a bright, shining star, like the sun we know today. They lived in the branches of a great tree that towered above the Eastern Ocean and every day, at dawn, one of them would take a turn at lighting up the sky and warming the earth.

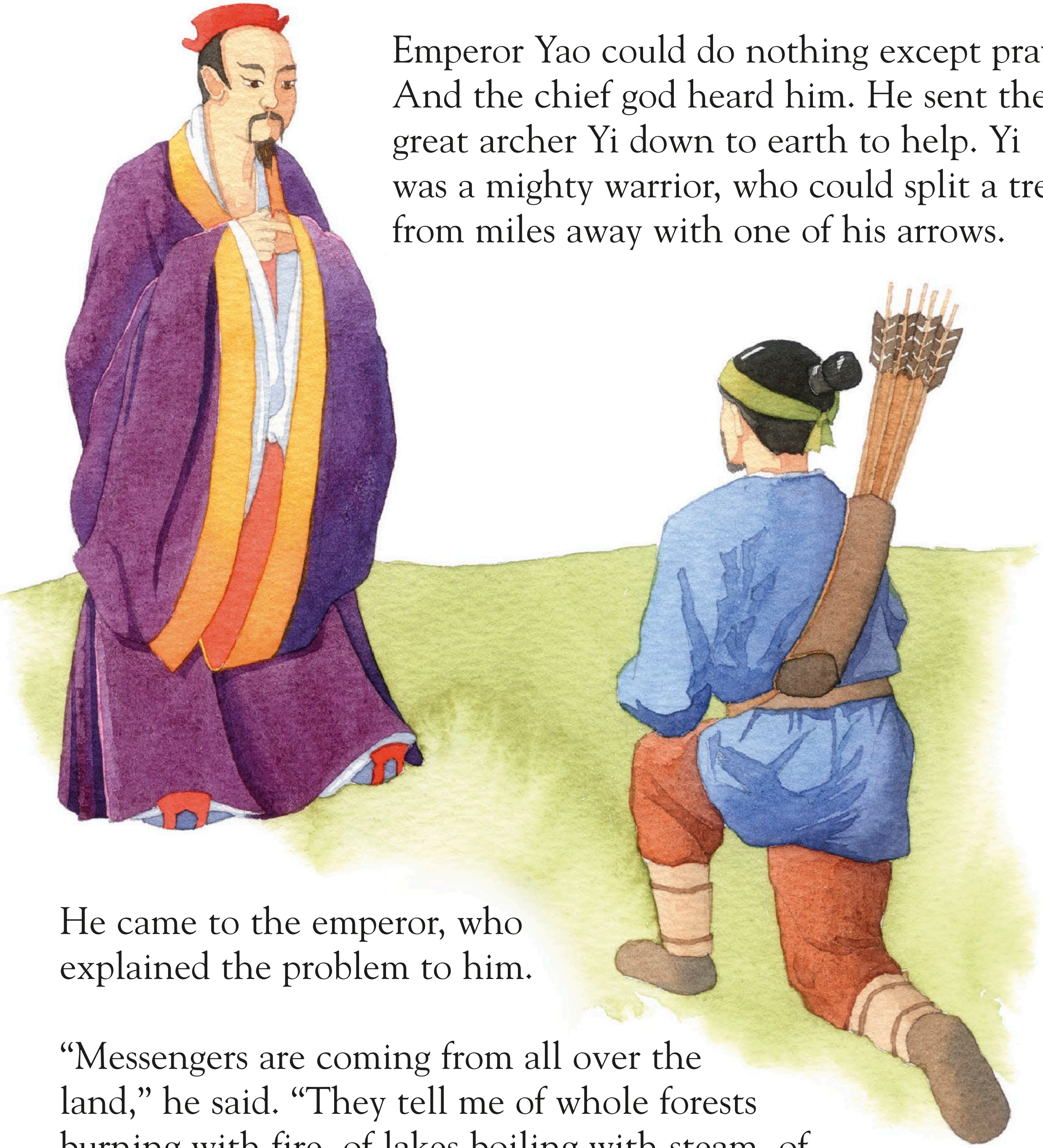




They did this in strict order, one sun per day, and everyone was happy.

But one day, the suns got tired of having no companions when they went about their work, and they decided they would all go out and play in the sky together.

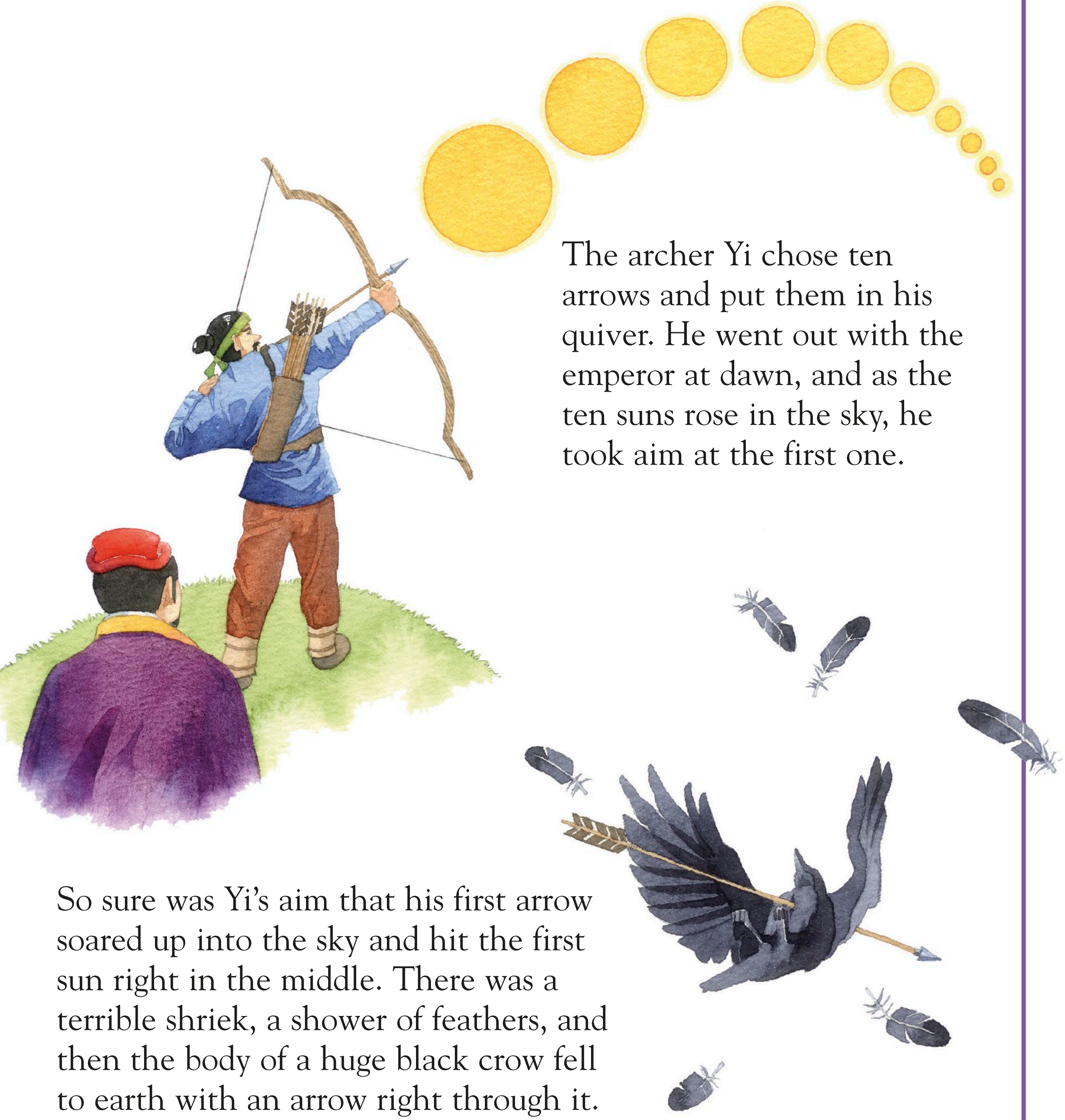
With so much heat and light shining on the Earth, the rivers soon dried up and the crops in the fields got scorched. So there was a danger that people would have nothing to eat or drink. Even the cows and sheep in the fields were dying of thirst. And it was much too hot for people to go out in the daytime.



Emperor Yao could do nothing except pray. And the chief god heard him. He sent the great archer Yi down to earth to help. Yi was a mighty warrior, who could split a tree from miles away with one of his arrows.

He came to the emperor, who explained the problem to him.

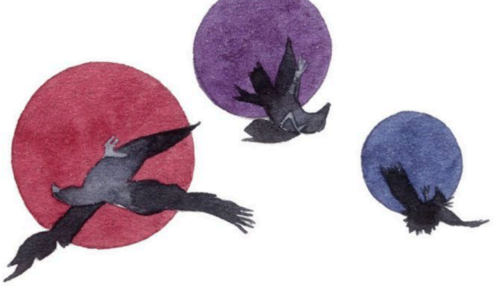
“Messengers are coming from all over the land,” he said. “They tell me of whole forests burning with fire, of lakes boiling with steam, of monsters being released from the deeps of the sea. We can’t go on like this, or all life on earth will die.”

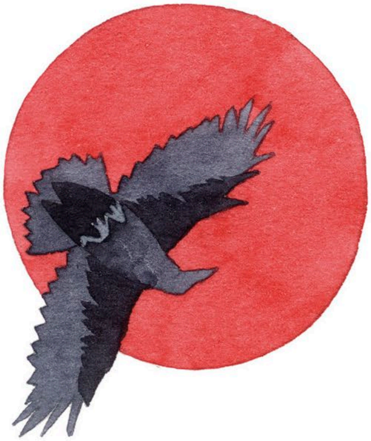


The archer Yi chose ten arrows and put them in his quiver. He went out with the emperor at dawn, and as the ten suns rose in the sky, he took aim at the first one.

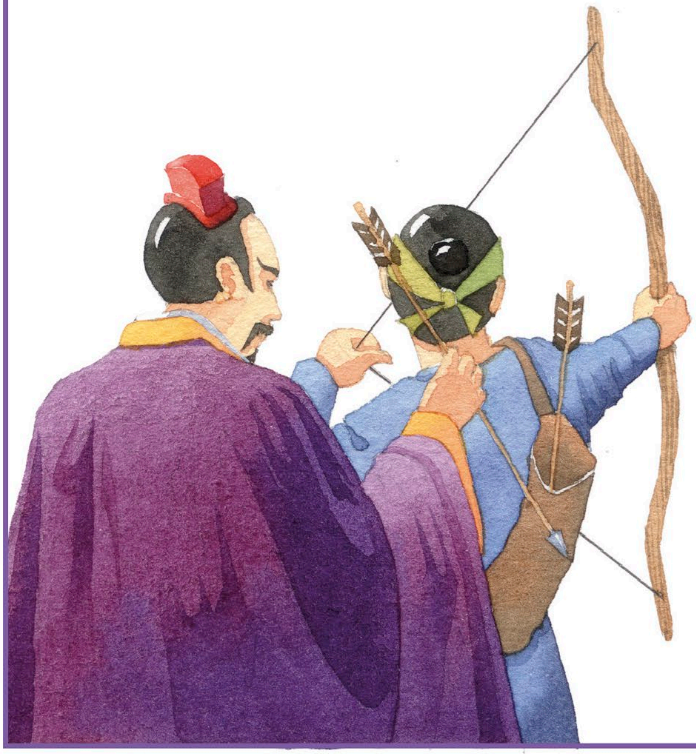
So sure was Yi’s aim that his first arrow soared up into the sky and hit the first sun right in the middle. There was a terrible shriek, a shower of feathers, and then the body of a huge black crow fell to earth with an arrow right through it.

"That's what we always believed," whispered the crowd. "Magicians told us that a sun was just a huge golden crow. But it's black now." They allowed themselves a small cheer.





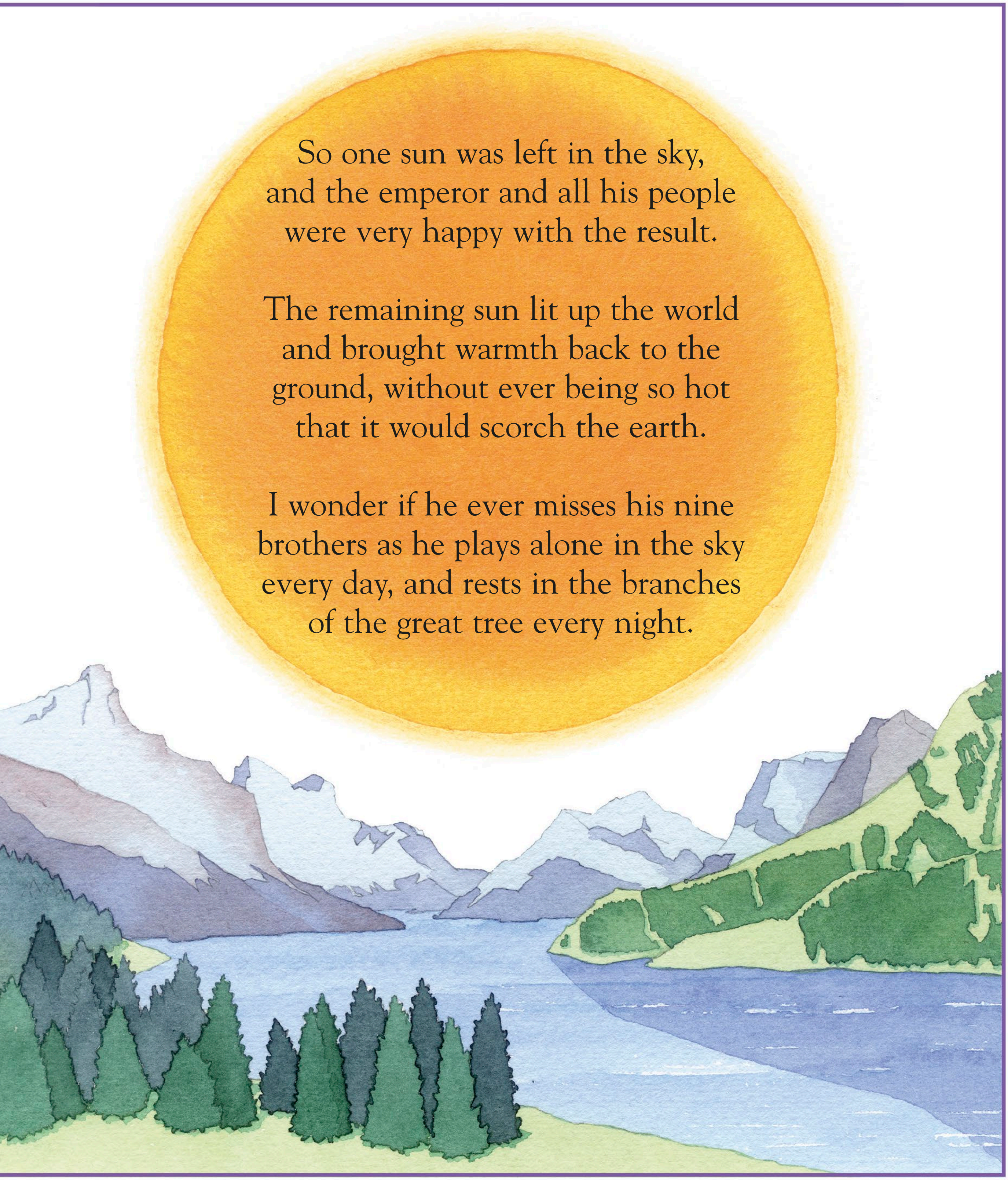
Yi was now taking arrows from his quiver and shooting suns at a terrible speed. Crow after crow fell from the sky.



Then there were two left. The emperor saw that Yi had two arrows still in his quiver, and he became afraid.

"We need one sun," he thought, and he took one of the arrows and hid it in his robe.

The archer took the ninth arrow and shot the ninth sun. He reached behind him for the tenth arrow, but it was gone.

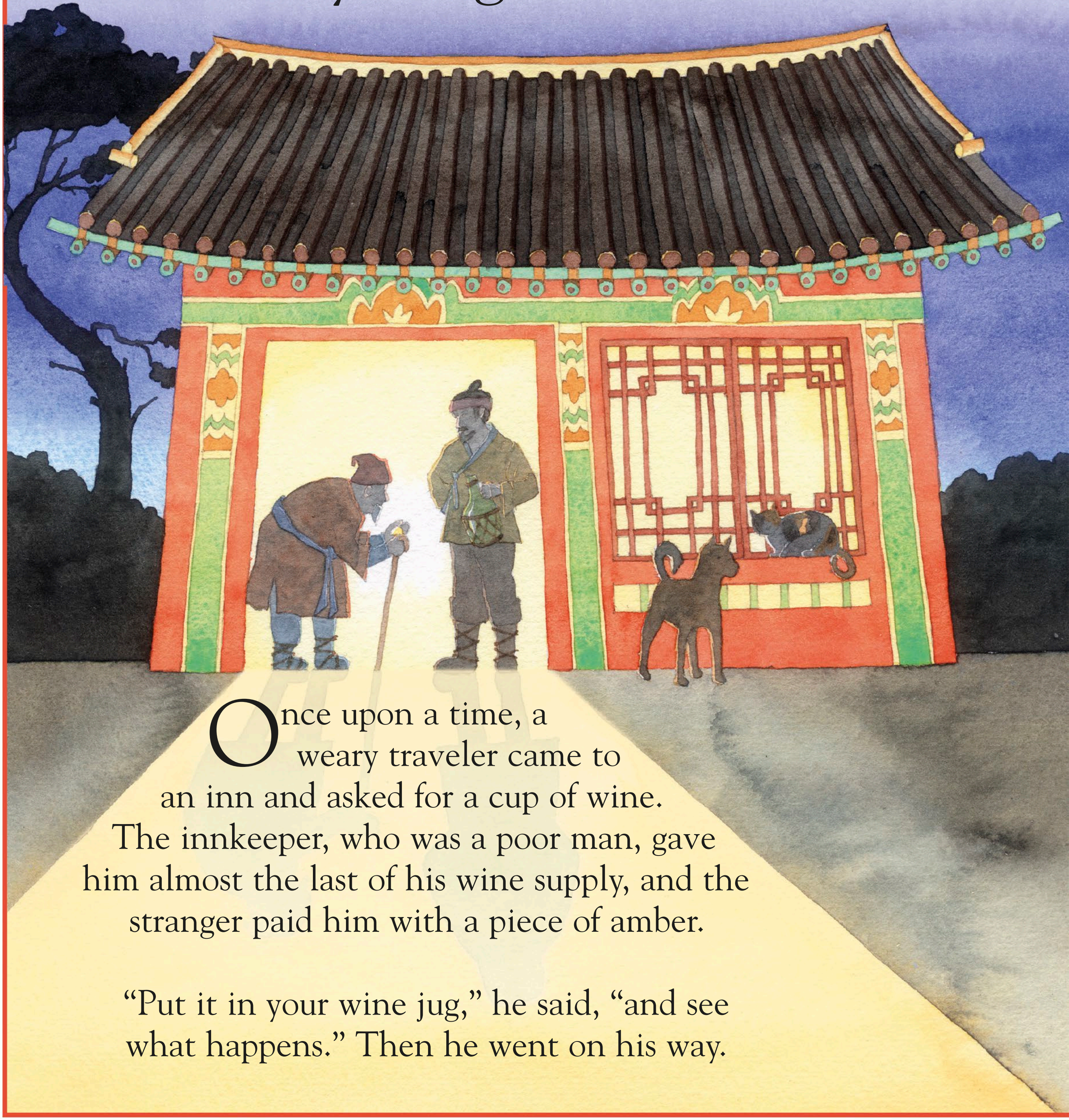


So one sun was left in the sky, and the emperor and all his people were very happy with the result.

The remaining sun lit up the world and brought warmth back to the ground, without ever being so hot that it would scorch the earth.

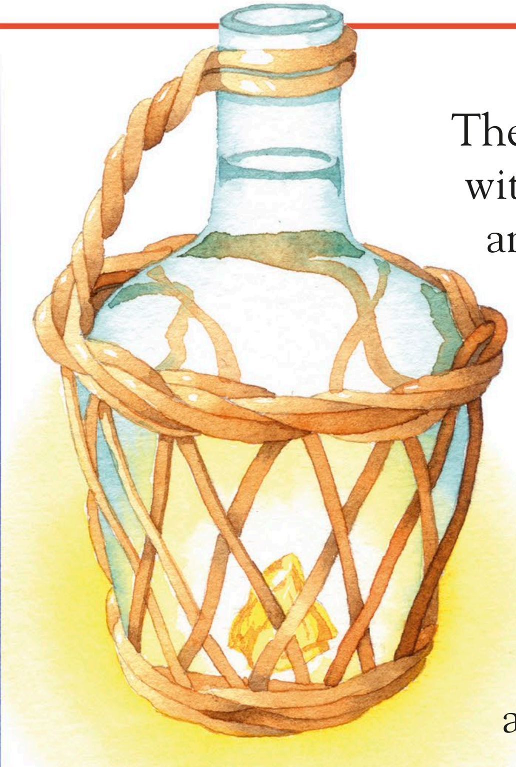
I wonder if he ever misses his nine brothers as he plays alone in the sky every day, and rests in the branches of the great tree every night.

Why Dogs Hate Cats



Once upon a time, a weary traveler came to an inn and asked for a cup of wine. The innkeeper, who was a poor man, gave him almost the last of his wine supply, and the stranger paid him with a piece of amber.

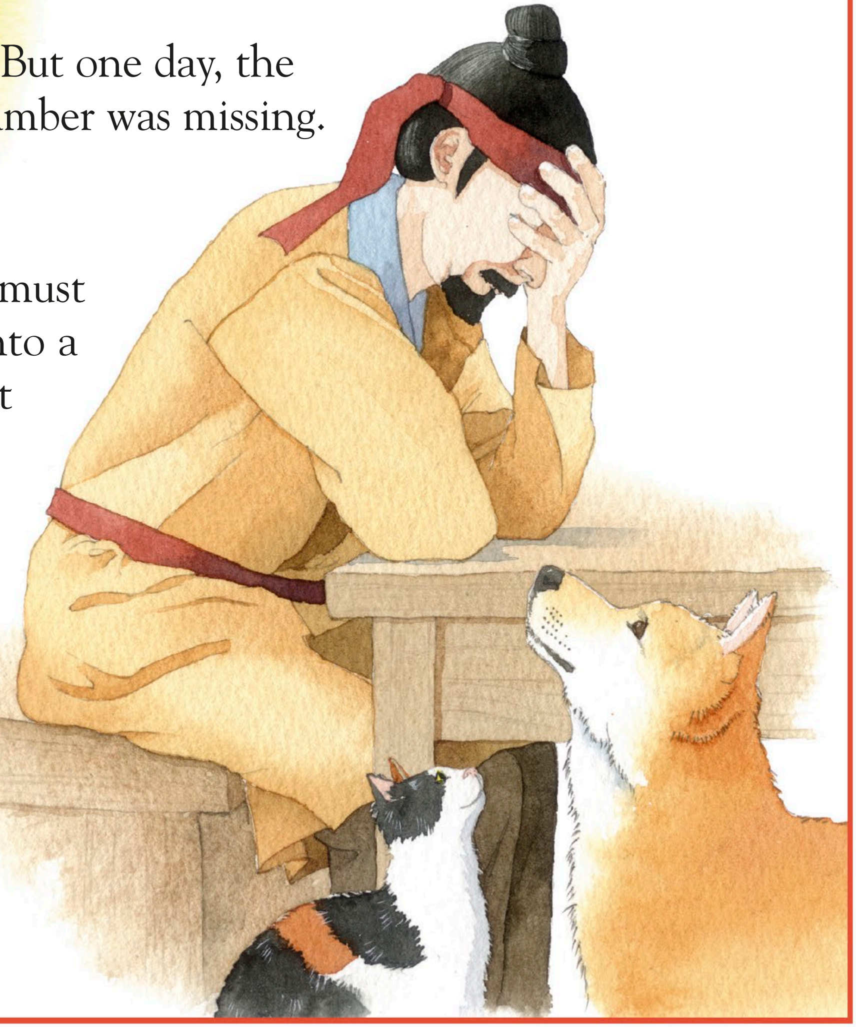
"Put it in your wine jug," he said, "and see what happens." Then he went on his way.



The innkeeper put the amber in the jug with the last drops of drink and—to his amazement—the jug immediately overflowed with good, rich wine.

From then on, the innkeeper's fortunes improved, for he never ran out of wine to sell to his customers. He lived contentedly with his dog and cat.

But one day, the amber was missing.

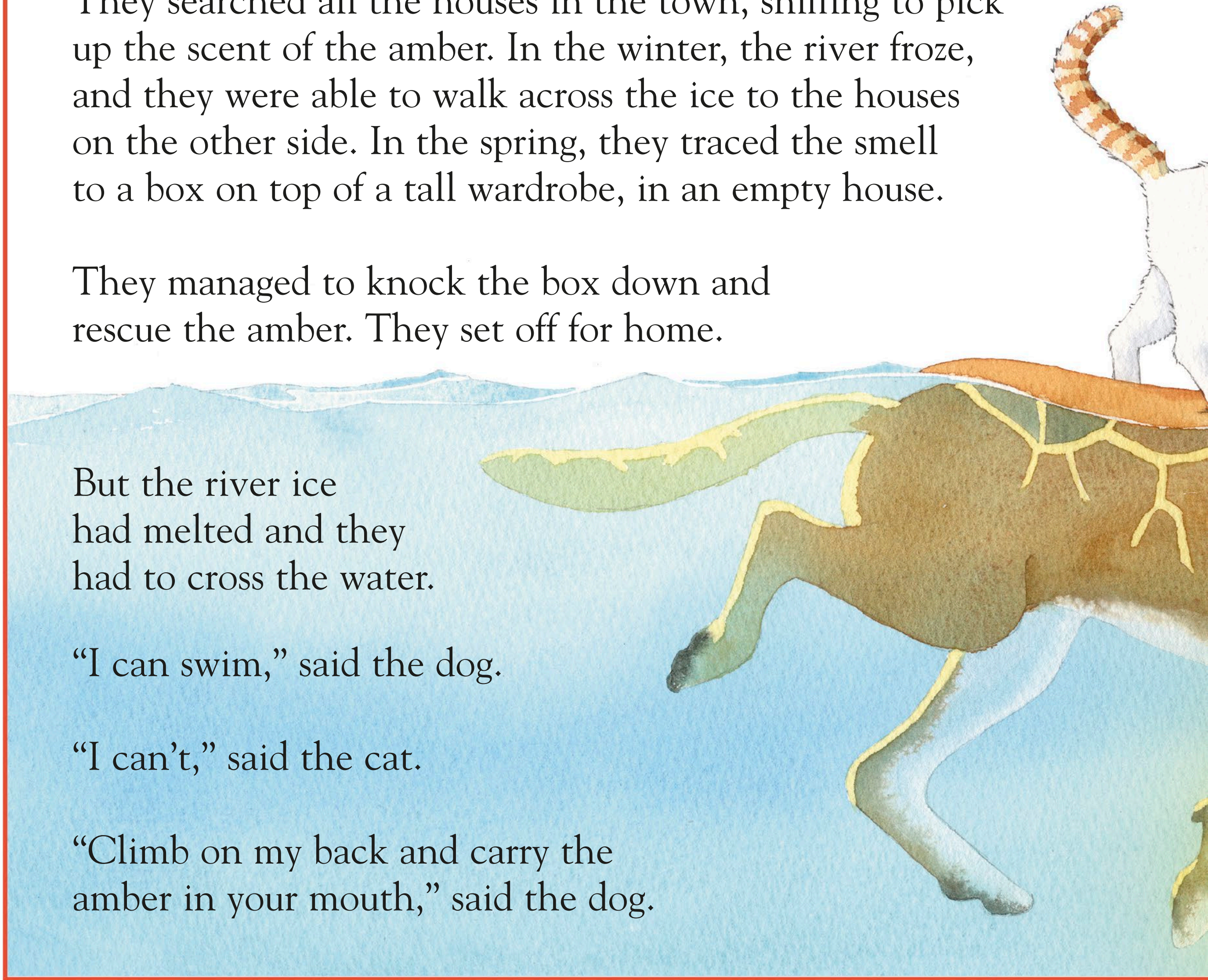


"Oh no," he wailed. "It must have been poured out into a cup and someone took it home."

He was so sad that the dog and cat promised to help him, and they set out to search for the magic piece of amber that had made their owner so happy.

They searched all the houses in the town, sniffing to pick up the scent of the amber. In the winter, the river froze, and they were able to walk across the ice to the houses on the other side. In the spring, they traced the smell to a box on top of a tall wardrobe, in an empty house.

They managed to knock the box down and rescue the amber. They set off for home.



But the river ice
had melted and they
had to cross the water.

"I can swim," said the dog.

"I can't," said the cat.

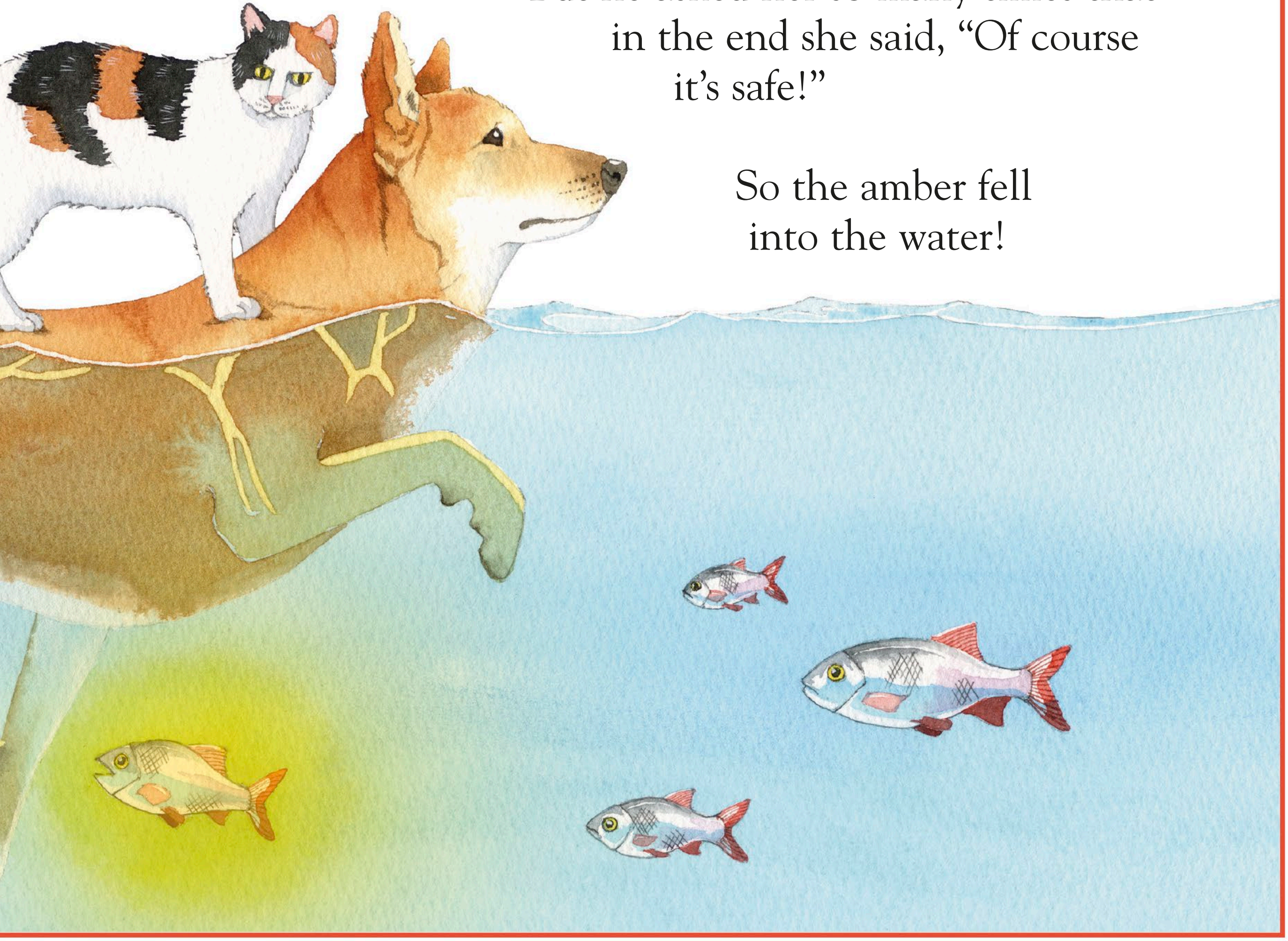
"Climb on my back and carry the amber in your mouth," said the dog.

And he got in the water with the cat on his back.

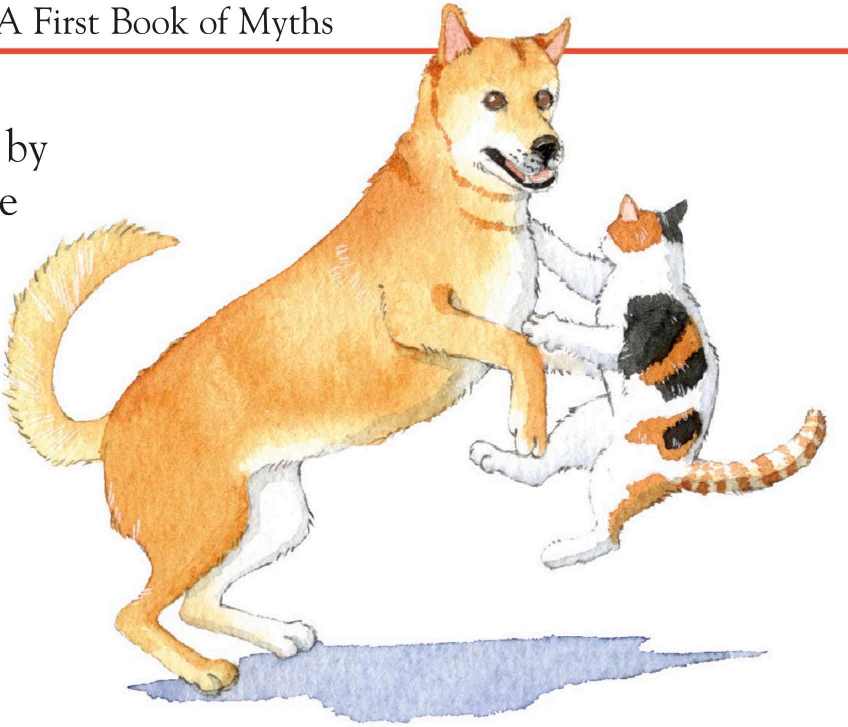
Halfway across, the dog asked the cat if the amber was safe. But she couldn't answer because if she opened her mouth to speak, she would drop the amber.

But he asked her so many times that in the end she said, "Of course it's safe!"

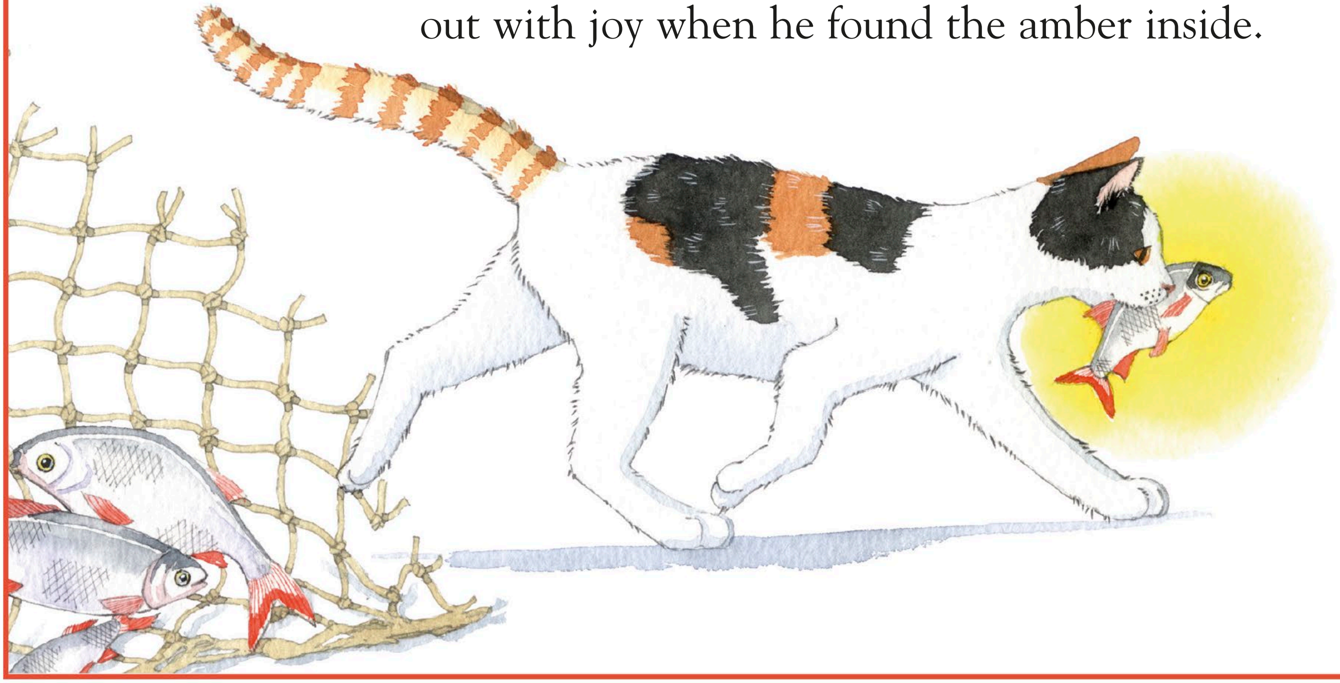
So the amber fell into the water!



They were on the shore by now, and started to argue and fight so badly that the cat escaped only by climbing up a tree. While she was up there, she caught the scent of amber again, and traced it to a fish that had just been caught by a fisherman.



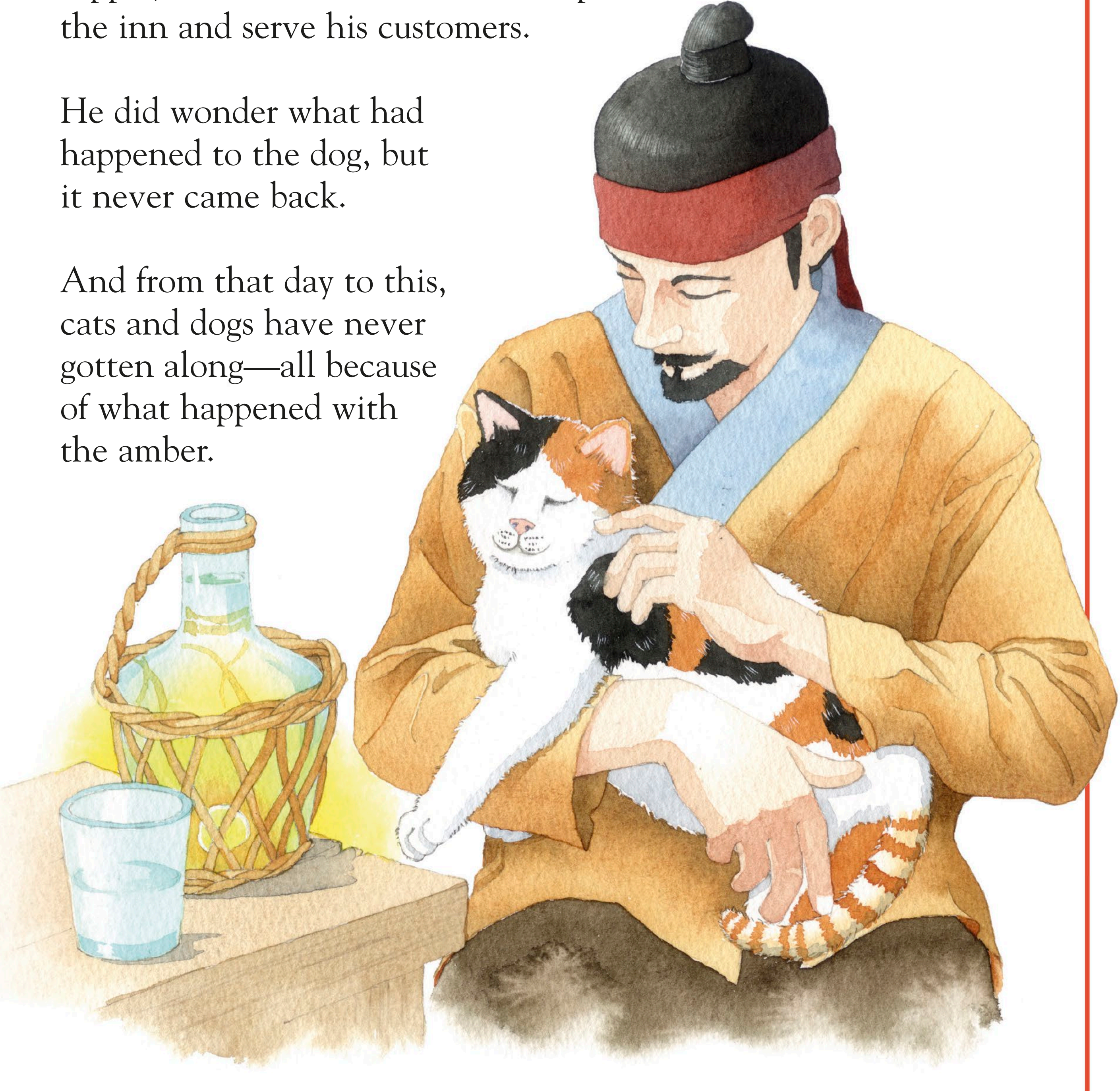
Quickly, she caught the fish in her mouth. She ran away back to her master and gave it to him. He cut it open to cook for his supper and cried out with joy when he found the amber inside.



So he had a good cup of wine with his supper, and he was soon able to reopen the inn and serve his customers.

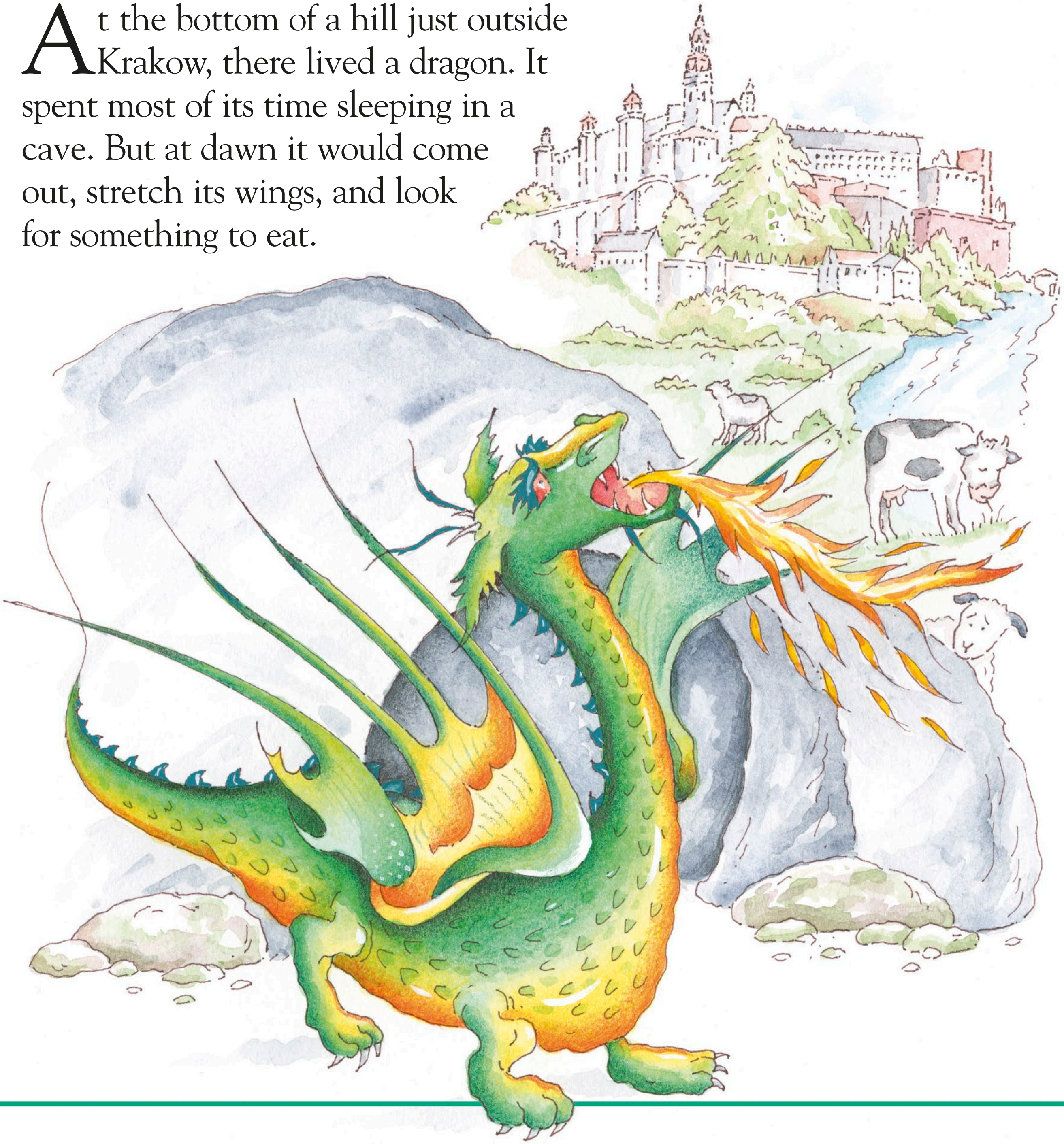
He did wonder what had happened to the dog, but it never came back.

And from that day to this, cats and dogs have never gotten along—all because of what happened with the amber.



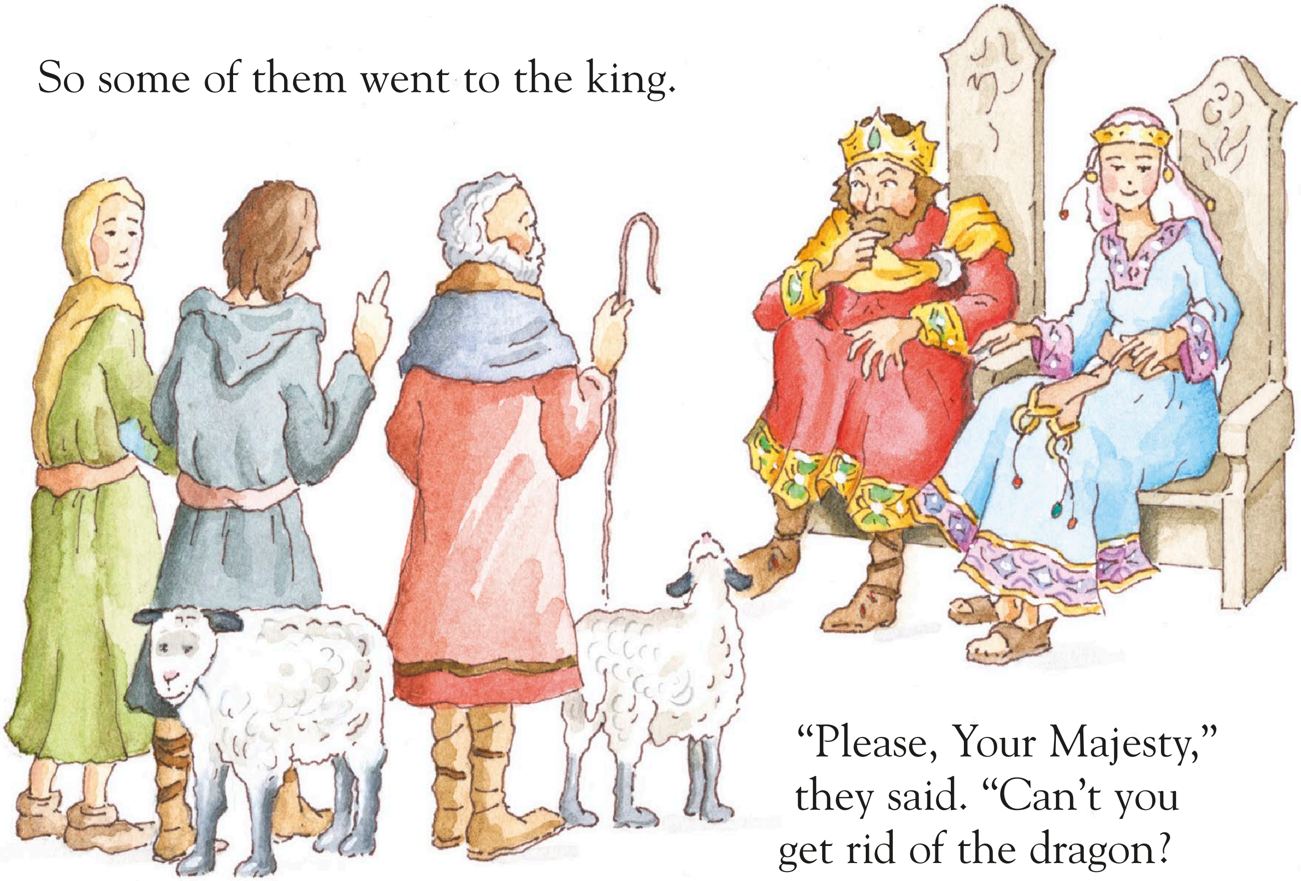
The Dragon of Krakow

At the bottom of a hill just outside Krakow, there lived a dragon. It spent most of its time sleeping in a cave. But at dawn it would come out, stretch its wings, and look for something to eat.



The local people were afraid of the dragon and kept well away from its hill. But sometimes, their sheep or cows strayed nearby and became dragon breakfast.

So some of them went to the king.

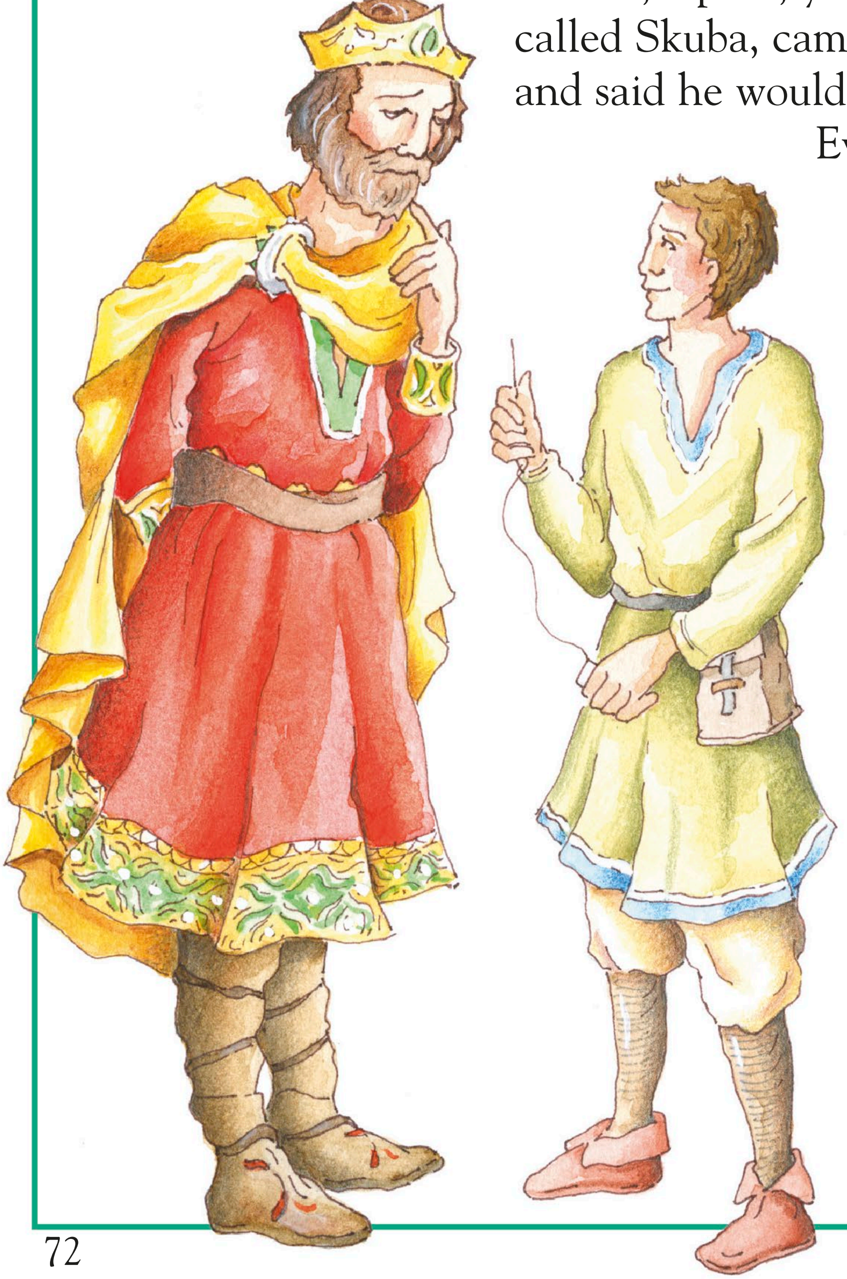


"Please, Your Majesty," they said. "Can't you get rid of the dragon? It is taking too many of our animals."

King Krakus promised he would do something. He announced that anyone who could get rid of the dragon would be given his daughter, Wanda, in marriage, and half of his lands.

After that, many brave—or foolish—young men came to try their luck. The most fortunate ones went home with their hair and eyebrows burned off. The unluckiest ended up inside the dragon.

At last, a poor, young shoemaker, called Skuba, came to the palace and said he would deal with the dragon. Everyone laughed, but King Krakus was desperate. So he decided to give the boy a chance.

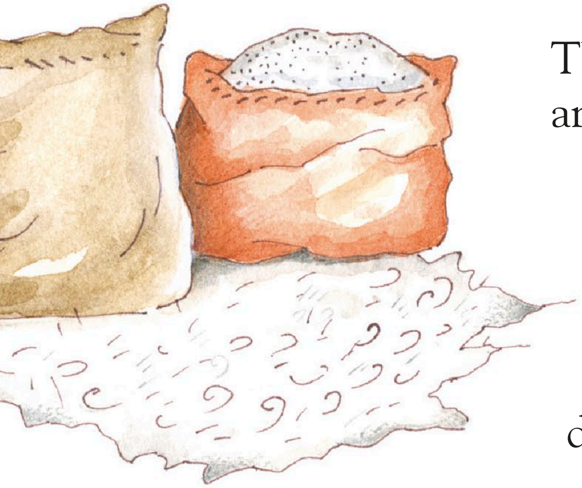


“What do you need?” he asked.

“A lamb’s skin, some gunpowder, and some mustard,” said Skuba.

“What weapons do you have?” asked the king.

“Just my needle and thread,” said the boy.



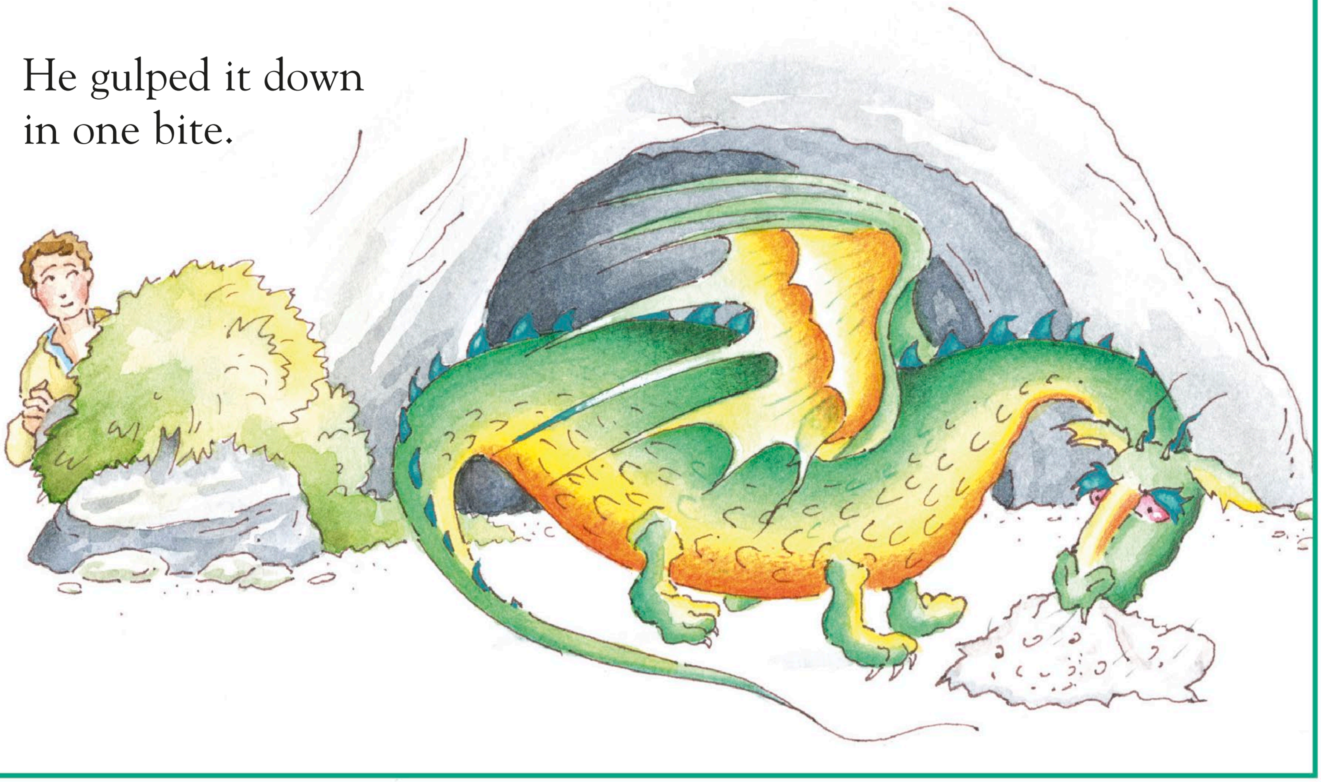
The king gave him what he needed, and the young shoemaker sewed the gunpowder and mustard up inside the lamb's skin. He took the bundle to the dragon's hill.

Then he laid the "lamb" outside the dragon's cave and hid behind a bush.

Dawn came and the dragon emerged from the cave, stretching and yawning. He saw what he thought was a dead lamb.

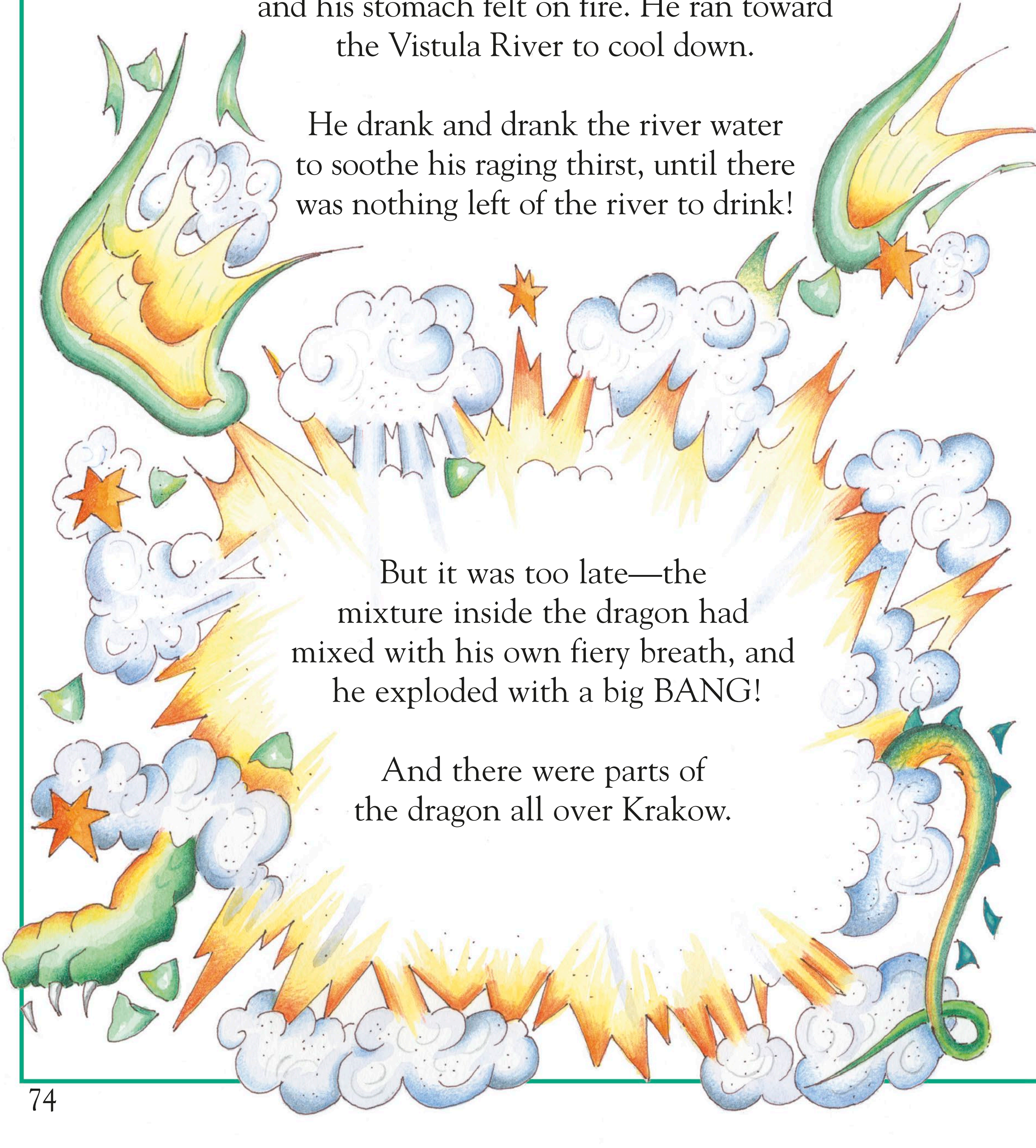
"Hmm," he thought. "A nice easy breakfast today."

He gulped it down in one bite.



And then … the dragon's throat started to burn
and his stomach felt on fire. He ran toward
the Vistula River to cool down.

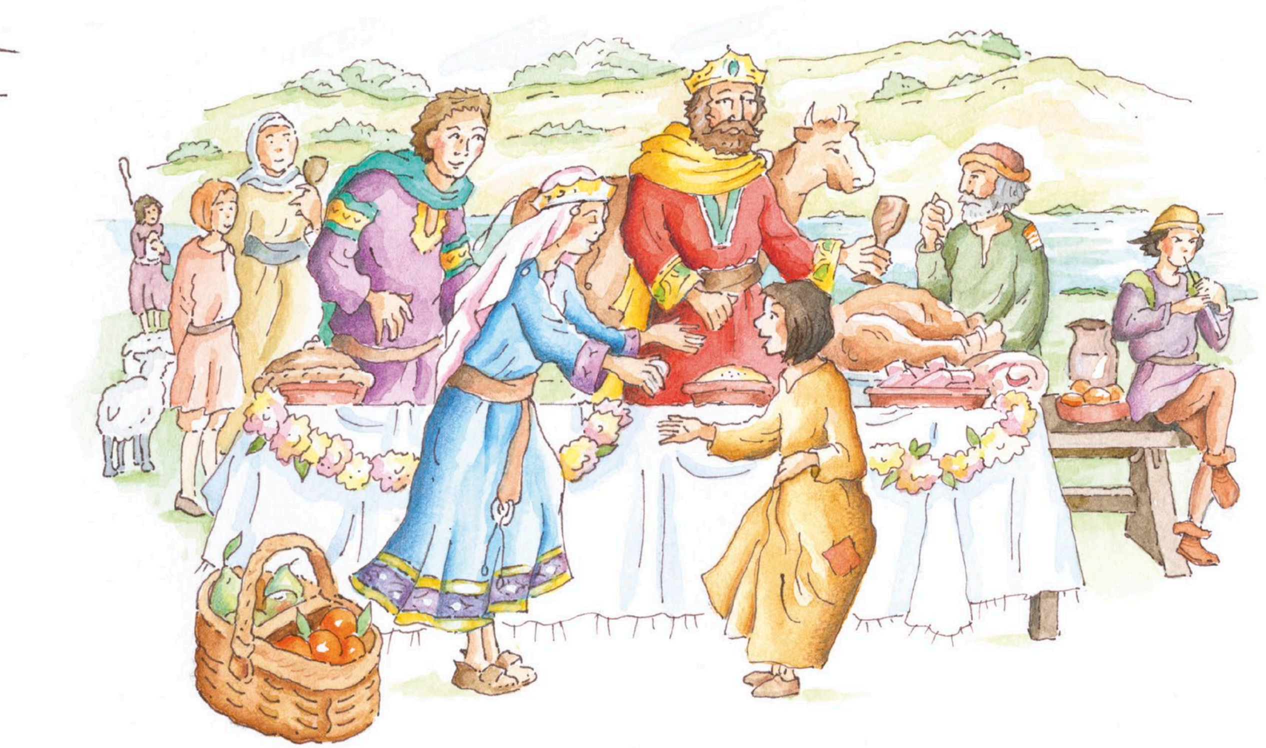
He drank and drank the river water
to soothe his raging thirst, until there
was nothing left of the river to drink!



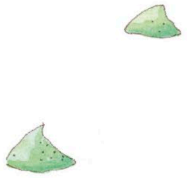
But it was too late—the
mixture inside the dragon had
mixed with his own fiery breath, and
he exploded with a big BANG!

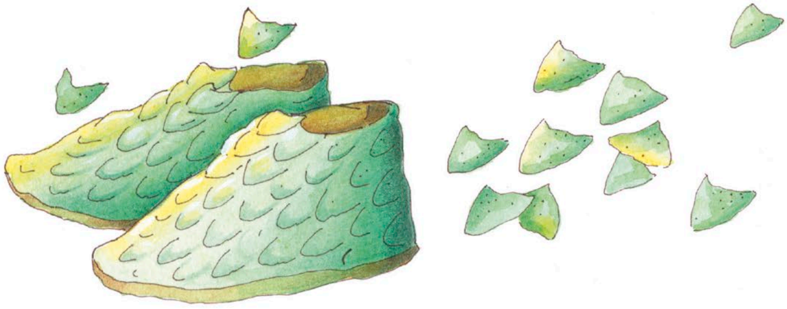
And there were parts of
the dragon all over Krakow.

The smart shoemaker was happily married to Princess Wanda. And the people of Krakow were happy, because they no longer had to worry about being eaten by a dragon.



The royal couple held a big picnic on the riverbank, and any child who found a dragon's scale and brought it to them got a golden ducat in return.



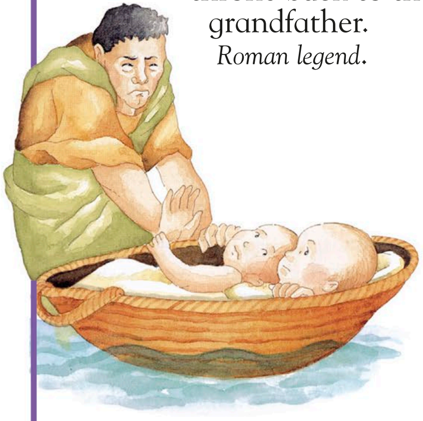


Prince Skuba saved all the shiny scales and made them into a pair of shoes for his first baby.

Who's Who in First Myths

Amulius **Page 20**

King of Alba Longa, in Italy. Amulius stole the crown from his brother Numitor. He then killed Numitor's son and locked up the daughter. But Amulius was killed by his great-nephews Romulus and Remus, who gave the throne back to their grandfather.
Roman legend.



Andromeda **Page 14**

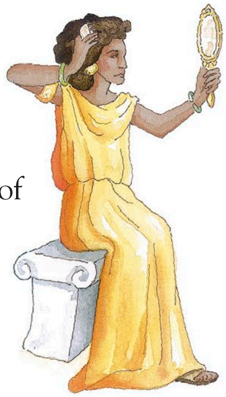
Ethiopian princess. The beautiful daughter of Cassiopeia. She was saved by Perseus from being eaten by a sea-monster.
Greek legend.

Balder **Page 38**

Norse god. He was the son of Odin and Frigg and was accidentally killed by his blind brother, Hoder.
Norse myth.

Cassiopeia
Page 14

Queen of Ethiopia. The mother of Andromeda. She was punished for being vain.
Greek legend.

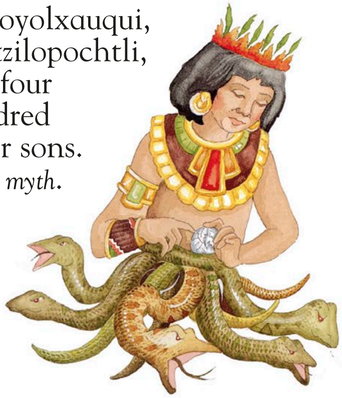


Cepheus **Page 16**

The king of Ethiopia and husband of Cassiopeia. He was the father of Andromeda, and all three of them became constellations in the sky after their death.
Greek legend.

Coatlicue **Page 30**

Aztec earth goddess. She was the mother of Coyolxauqui, Huitzilopochtli, and four hundred other sons.
Aztec myth.



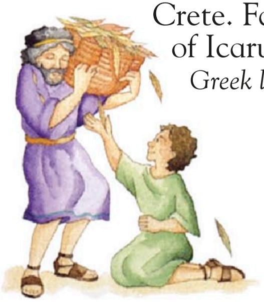
Coyolxauqui **Page 30**

Aztec goddess of the night. She was killed by her half-brother, Huitzilopochtli.
Aztec myth.

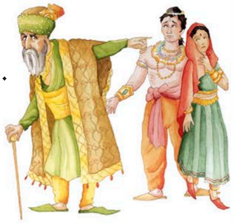
Coyote **Page 24**

The trickster figure in the mythology of several Native American peoples.
Native American myth.

Daedalus **Page 6**
Greek inventor and architect, who built the labyrinth for King Minos in Crete. Father of Icarus.
Greek legend.

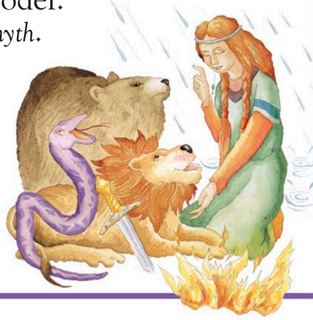


Dasharatha **Page 42**
King of Kosala in India. Father of Rama, Lakshmana, and their two brothers.
Hindu legend.

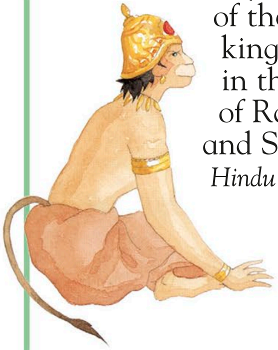


Dionysus **Page 10**
Greek god of feasting and drinking. Patron of Silenus.
Greek myth/legend.

Frigg **Page 38**
Norse goddess. Married to Odin, the chief god. Mother of Balder and Hoder.
Norse myth.

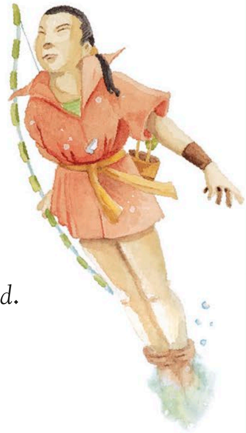


Hanuman **Page 46**
Very smart and brave monkey. Captain of the monkey-king's army in the story of Rama and Sita.
Hindu legend.

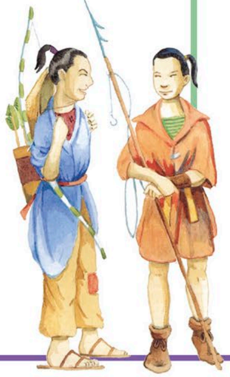


Hoder **Page 38**
Blind brother of Balder. Son of Frigg and Odin.
Norse myth.

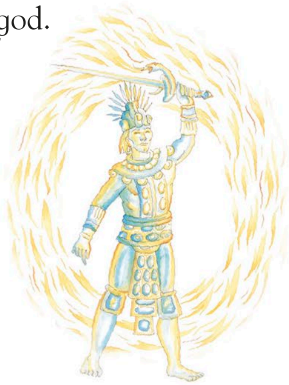
Hoderi **Page 52**
Great Japanese fisherman. Brother of Hoori.
Japanese legend.



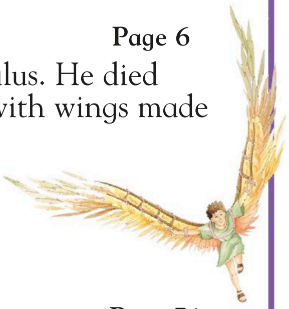
Hoori **Page 52**
Great Japanese hunter. Brother of Hoderi. He married the daughter of the sea god.
Japanese legend.



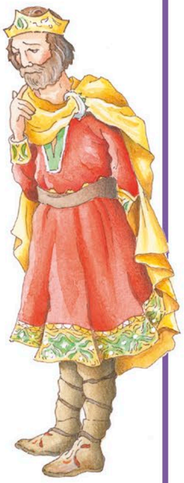
Huitzilopochtli **Page 33**
Aztec sun god. The son of Coatlicue.
Aztec myth.



Icarus **Page 6**
Son of Daedalus. He died trying to fly with wings made by his father.
Greek legend.



Krakus **Page 71**
Legendary Polish prince, the king of Krakow. In some versions of the dragon story, the shoemaker is called Krak and becomes King Krakus after killing the dragon.
Polish legend.



Lakshmana **Page 42**
Half-brother of Rama.
Hindu legend.

Loki **Page 41**

An immortal not accepted by the other Norse gods. He plays tricks, including the one that kills Balder.
Norse myth.

Mars **Page 20**

Roman god of war. The father of Romulus and Remus.
Roman legend.

Midas
Page 10

Greek king who was famous for being rich.
Greek myth/ legend.

Minos **Page 6**

King of Crete. He commissioned Daedalus to build a labyrinth to hide the Minotaur, a creature that was half-man, half-bull. Then Minos would not let Daedalus leave Crete.
Greek legend.

Mulungu **Page 56**

African sky spirit, who gave back a woman's baby after it had been swallowed by a crocodile.
Chaga legend.

Odin **Page 38**

Chief of the Norse gods. Father of Balder and Hoder.
Norse myth.

Perseus **Page 19**

Greek hero. He rescued Andromeda from the sea monster.
Greek legend.

Poseidon **Page 15**

Greek god of the sea. He sent the sea monster to punish Cassiopeia for being vain.
Greek legend.

Rama **Page 42**

Hero of the Hindu epic *The Ramayana*. He was married to Sita.
Hindu legend.

Ravana **Page 42**

Ten-headed demon who stole Sita from Rama.
Hindu legend.

Remus **Page 20**

Son of Mars and Sylvia. His twin brother was Romulus, who founded the city of Rome.
Roman legend.

Romulus
Page 20

Twin brother of Remus. He founded the city of Rome.
Roman legend.

Silenus
Page 10
Satyr, a goat-legged creature of Greek mythology, who loved to tell stories.
Greek myth/legend.

Sita **Page 42**
Indian princess. She was the wife of Rama. She was captured by Ravana the demon and rescued by Rama, Hanuman, and a troop of monkeys.
Hindu legend.

Skuba
Page 72
A poor Polish shoemaker's apprentice. He comes to Krakow with just his needles and thread, to seek his fortune.
Polish legend.

Sylvia **Page 20**
(Also called Rhea Sylvia and Ilia) The mother of Romulus and Remus. She was cast into a river by her uncle and saved by a river god.
Roman legend.

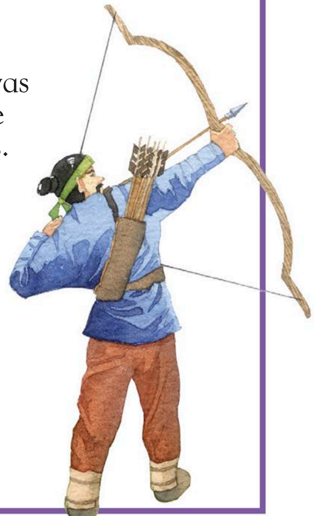
Toyotama **Page 54**
Princess of the kingdom under the sea. She could turn into a dragon at will. She married Hoori, a mortal, and bore him a son.
Japanese legend.

Wanda **Page 71**
A Polish princess, the daughter of King Krakus. She was famous for her great beauty.
Polish legend.

Yao **Page 64**
Emperor Yao was a legendary Chinese ruler. He was known for his kindness and wisdom. He is believed to have started the first calendar that divided the year into 365 days.
Chinese myth.

Yhi **Page 34**
Aborigine sun goddess. She gave Australian animals their strange shapes.
Aborigine creation myth.

Yi **Page 64**
Sometimes known as Hou Yi, he was a god in Chinese mythology, who was a Divine Archer. He often came to earth to help mortals and was married to the moon-goddess.
Chinese myth.



About the Stories

I have lots of books of myths and legends on my shelves and am also a great user of libraries and the Internet. But some of the stories in this book I have known since I was a little girl—the death of Balder is the first story I remember being told. If you and your child want to find out more about each story, here are some other books you might try reading. – M.H.

The Fall of Icarus, The Golden Touch, and Andromeda
A good sourcebook for all Greek myths and legends is
Greek Myths by Robert Graves (Penguin complete edition, 1992)

Wolf Babies
There is no convenient source for the well-known story of Romulus and Remus, which comes from several Greek and Roman writers. I have used the scholarly work *Remus* by T.P. Wiseman (Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Coyote Dances with a Star
American Indian Myths and Legends
by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz (Pantheon, 1990)

The First Corn
Tales of the North American Indians by Stith Thompson
(Forgotten Books, 2008)

A Newborn Warrior
Aztec and Maya Myths by Karl Taube (British Museum Press, 1993)

How the Animals Got Their Shapes
This is based on a story in *Myths and Legends of Australia* by A.W. Reed (Reed, 1965)

How Butterflies Began
Aborigine Myths and Legends by William Ramsay Smith
(Senate, 1996)

Balder the Beautiful
The main source for Norse myths and legends is *Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturlusson. A convenient modern retelling is *The Norse Myths* by Kevin Crossley-Holland (Walker Studio, 2017)

Rama and Sita
The Hindu epic The Ramayana is a long tale, filling four volumes in the original. I have relied on *Indian Tales and Legends* by J.E.B. Gray
(Oxford University Press, 1989)

The Enchanted Island
Egyptian Myth and Legend by Donald A. Mackenzie
(Ulan Press, 2012)

The Kingdom Under the Sea
Myths and Legends of Japan by F. Hadland Davis
(Dover, 2003)

The Crocodile and the Baby
This is based on a story in *African-American Alphabet* by Gerald Hausman
(St. Martin's Press Inc., 1997)

Ten Suns in the Sky
Tales from China by Cyril Birch
(Oxford University Press, 2000)

The Dragon of Krakow
The Dragon of Krakow and other Polish Stories by Richard Monte
(Frances Lincoln, 2008)

Why Dogs Hate Cats
Korean Folk Tales by James Riordan
(Oxford University Press, 1994)

This exciting collection introduces children to some of the most engaging myths and legends from around the world. Beautifully illustrated and imaginatively retold, these stories are ideal for reading aloud and enjoying together.

The Fall of Icarus • The Golden Touch • Andromeda • Wolf Babies
Coyote Dances with a Star • The First Corn • A Newborn Warrior
How the Animals Got Their Shapes • How Butterflies Began
Balder the Beautiful • Rama and Sita • The Enchanted Island
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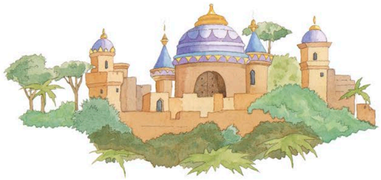
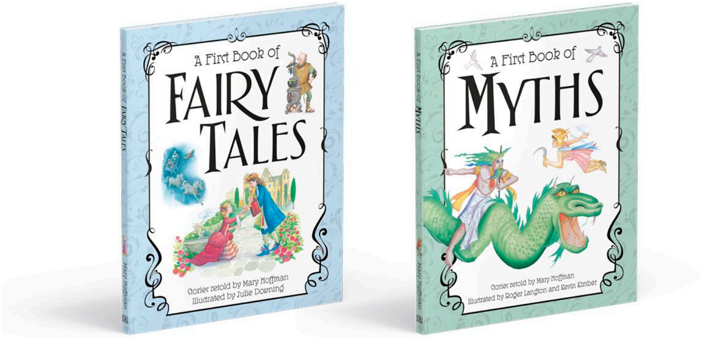


These two charmingly illustrated books bring classic fairy tales and myths to life. Children will remember these enchanting stories for years to come.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